

TRUCKIN' WITH THE
GRATEFUL DEAD

TO:

EGYPT

BY ROBERT NICHOLS



\$10.00

READ the true story of the
GRATEFUL DEAD'S legendary
pilgrimage to the Great Cheop's Pyramid
in Egypt.

READ about the group's efforts to wire
the King's Chamber into their sound system
and use it as an echo chamber.

The author, a long-time employee of the
GRATEFUL DEAD, worked personally
to achieve this goal. His story combined with
original photographs and the art work of
BOB THOMAS record this historic
journey.

ROBERT NICHOLS
near his home on the
Feather River. This, his
first book, is a personal
achievement.

MOONBOW PRESS

Quincy, California

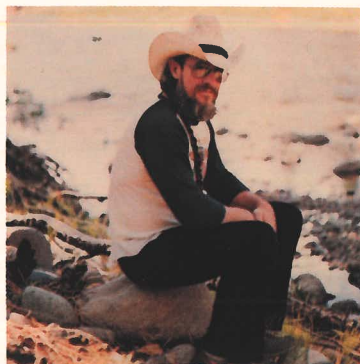


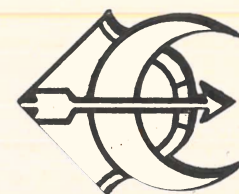
Photo By Kathi Osteen

**TRUCKIN' WITH THE
GRATEFUL DEAD**

TO:

EGYPT

BY ROBERT NICHOLS



Moonbow Press

Produced by Moonbow Press, P.O. Box 4955,
San Rafael, CA 94913.

Copyright © 1984 Moonbow Press

Cover Design Copyright © Bob Thomas

All rights reserved: To reprint any part, please request
permission from the author or publisher.

Typeset by Eva Small, Feather Publishing Co., Quincy, CA
and Copy Works, San Rafael, CA.

Printed in the United States of America by McNaughton & Gunn,
Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Book layout by Bob Thomas and Mary Van Der Ploeg.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: Pending.

DEDICATED TO THE OVER-SEER OF THE GREAT SHOW

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To the Grateful Dead, their crew and staff, to Kathi Osteen, Bear, Terry Brown, John Fortune, Frances Shurtliff and Bob Thomas, a special thanks.

PHOTO AND GRAPHIC CREDITS

The author gratefully acknowledges the following for their contributions:

	Plates
Kathi Osteen	6, 32, 33, 39
Bernie Bildman	1, 4, 5, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 29, 32, 35, 37, 38.
Jerilyn Brandelius	10, 12, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 34, 36.
Grateful Dead Archives	2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 30, 31, 41.

Cover Painting, Design and Line Drawings by Bob Thomas.

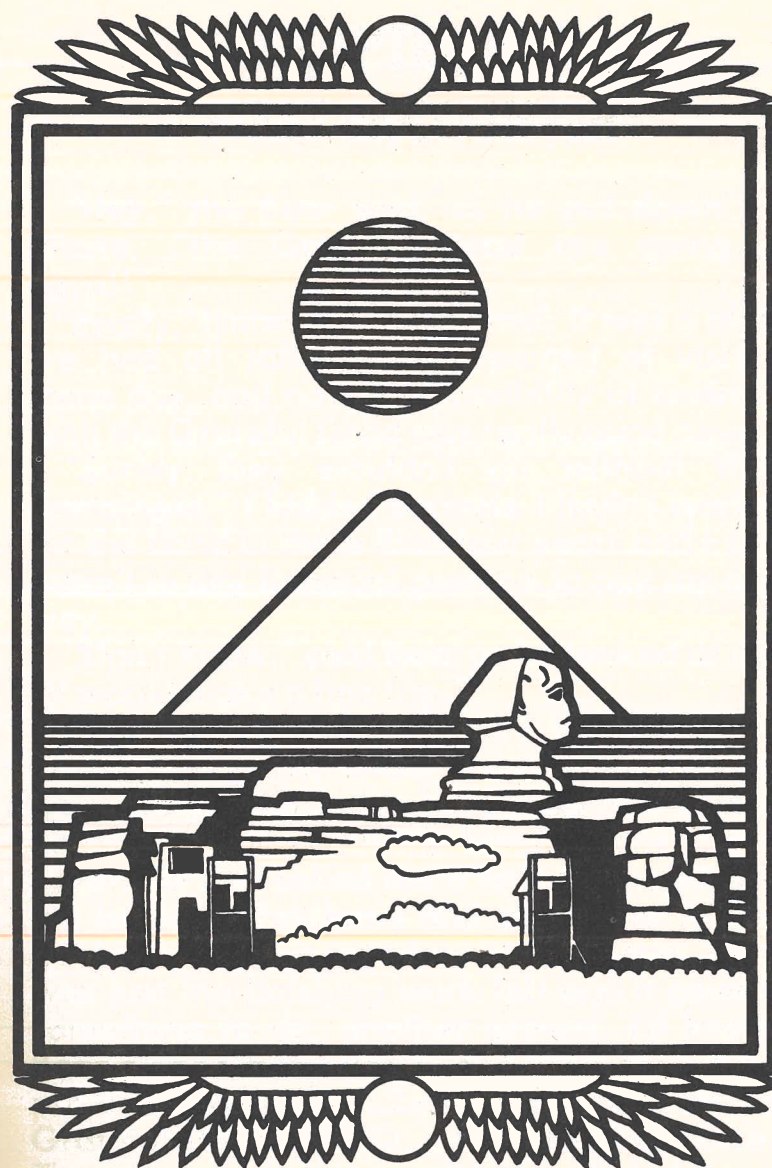
Astrological Charts by Robert Nichols and Kathi Osteen.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Chapter One—First Encounter	1
Chapter Two—Cosmic Connection	9
Chapter Three—Truckin'	14
Chapter Four—Red Rocks	24
Chapter Five—Egypt	37
Chapter Six—Sakkara	59
Chapter Seven—The Dead Arrive	69
Chapter Eight—King's Chamber	77
Chapter Nine—Gigs	86
Chapter Ten—U.S.A.	98
Appendix—	
Bibliography	
Egyptian Periods and Dynasties	
Maps and Diagram of Cheops' Interior	
Astrology Interview	
Epilogue	

የግዛቱ

THE GREAT HEAD
IN
19003





CHAPTER ONE

FIRST ENCOUNTER

"Hey," the Bear said, as he put down the phone, "the Grateful Dead are going to Egypt!"

"Really," Isabelle and I chimed. It was a place we had all talked and dreamed of visiting some day, and now the possibility of seeing it with the Grateful Dead was really good news.

"Surely they wouldn't go without their Astrologer," I kidded because I hadn't worked for the band in more than four years and I sure wasn't in any financial position to pay my own way.

"Don't know," said Bear as he looked at me, "it would make a fine trip."

Bear was moving into a new home in Marin County still partly under construction, in fact, we were putting in the hardwood floors when he got the call about the band's plans to tour Egypt. He had called me a few days earlier at my home in Petaluma and asked me to help get his new place together and to move. There was just the finishing work left and it gave us something to do, another project. I'd known Bear a good many years, and we'd done many projects together, including an album for the Grateful Dead in 1973, titled "Bear's Choice." The album hadn't done all that well, but it sure was a fun project and brought my first encounter with the band.

The Grateful Dead blazed their way out of the San Francisco area during the height of the

Haight-Ashbury 'flower power' days, and through a performance of magic all its own, the band had managed to stay together, and the result when I first met them was a highly-polished and professional rock and roll band.

Originally, the group was composed of two guitars, one drummer, a bass and keyboard player: Jerry Garcia on lead guitar, Bob Weir on rhythm, and Billy Kreutzmann on drums, Phil Lesh on bass and Ron 'Pig Pen' McKernan playing keyboard and harmonica. They were soon joined by a second drummer, Mickey Hart.

From the beginning the band showed promise and always, or let's say almost always, at some point in the performances it became apparent that there was some kind of outside help, an additional musician, and this 'energy' is referred to as the 'seventh member.'

Bear had been an early supporter of the Grateful Dead, giving materially and contributing his time to become their sound man. Also, he had recorded the band from the beginning, along with any other band who might be playing on the same bill, and there were many. My job when he had worked on "Bear's Choice," was to go back through these old tapes and separate the Grateful Dead's music from all the other bands they had played with, and from those we would choose tunes to go on the album.

That gave me a chance to work with the band's music over the years, and I had seen a constant progression, an evolution in the sound from the mid-sixties to the time of "Bear's Choice" in '73. The recording techniques had improved in that time also, I might add, because some of the early stuff was

definitely on the rough side, and with labels such as "Sat. Night," no way to know when or where the performance occurred. The magic of this band has never been recorded because the sound is the experience of the moment of creation, something happens in live performances that can carry you, if you just go with it.

Because of ill health, Pig Pen had taken leave from the band by the time of "Bear's Choice," and Keith Godchaux had replaced him on keyboard. Keith's wife, Donna, an experienced vocalist, would join the group later. The music changed with that too, because Pig Pen was a real contributing force and in his own style was probably the best blues player and singer around. The band played on, however, and if different, still just as interesting, intriguing.

Pig Pen died in the middle of "Bear's Choice" and it was a great loss to all of those who knew and loved him. The album was revised to include his music and the sound of his harmonica took on a new level.

I'd seen the Dead perform at Winterland on Bear's invitation before we started the album, and at the end of the show I was left with the clear thought of just having been highly entertained by the Universe. I mean, they somehow managed to play the audience almost as well as their instruments--raising the pitch, bringing it back down, moving the crowd, changing the energy. It is something to see, and see it you can, because I swear I have seen the sound ripple over the crowd, move the people, in a very special way.

We were working on the album in San Francisco at Alembic Studios, an off-shoot of the Grateful Dead family, and occasionally the

band would come in the studio to see just what we were up to. It was during these times that I got to know the band members personally, and became familiar with the rest of the crew: Larry 'Ram Rod' Shurtliff, Rex Jackson, John Hagen and Joe Winslow were the Oregon boys, Big Steve Parish, Sparky Razene and Bill 'Kidd' Candelario were the other roadies.

I am a long-time student of Astrology, and at the time I was doing charts on everyone I knew. In fact, that was how I had first met Bear, and as we hung out around the studio, I did charts on most of them, as time allowed. They were receptive to Astrology, and Jerry Garcia once showed me a very professional chart done on him by a large astrological firm in Boston. We used Astrology to time ourselves on the album also, anticipating periods to go for it, and knowing when obstacles were likely to appear. We found it to be very useful and relative. My first exposure to this family found them warm and they accepted me without hesitation.

After we completed "Bear's Choice" I was separated from the band for a while, because at that point there was really nothing for me to do. They, however, were in the process of building the world's most powerful portable sound system, and getting ready to take it on the road.

Bear called and asked me to come see him, he said he needed some advice on personal matters, and besides, the Grateful Dead were testing the massive sound system he had designed and didn't I want to see that?

"There is nothin' like a Grateful Dead Concert!" proclaim the posters, and that's a fact. They are a real happening, a place to see your friends and a place to BE. A 'Who's Who'

of rock and roll is seen backstage at Grateful Dead concerts, if you are anybody, you're there. You may not even need a ticket--Ram Rod once gave me that look and said, "Everybody's in here that's supposed to be..."

I met Bear in San Rafael and we drove over to the band's office. As soon as we entered the hallway we ran into Garcia who was carrying an armload of papers which he quickly shuffled about and stuck out his hand, "Hi, Bob, how have you been?" he asked.

"Good, Jerry," I responded, and added, "you're looking good."

"Hey, Jer," Bear said, "Bob used to work with scaffolding, and I think you guys might be looking for a road crew to work the stages." It was true, I did have some experience working with scaffolding from earlier days when I had worked on construction jobs, and I am physically a very strong man.

"Talk to Ram Rod, Bob," said Jerry, and, "good to have you back with us."

The sound system required two stages to accommodate it: while one was being played on, the other was being moved to the next gig, leap-frogging each other as they went down the road.

The first performance was being held at the Cow Palace, then Fresno, California, and on to the famed Hollywood Bowl--we were getting the trip down.

The stages were sixty feet long and from the center of the stage there rose up two towers, some forty feet in the air. Very impressive was this set up, and in a few days we hung from the towers like monkeys, putting the thing up, taking it down, moving it on to the next gig and sometimes taking sixteen to eighteen hours a day to do it, and we did it with joy in our

hearts. The long hours meant nothing to us and the work was done in the spirit of brotherhood, one man stopping, putting his work aside to help with a chore that was obviously beyond one person. The only way we could make it happen was to work together.

The floor was laid some ten feet above the ground, one-inch thick plyboard was wired, nailed and bolted to the scaffolding, two layers thick, because when the Grateful Dead cranked that enormous system on, the floor would rise and fall as much as twelve inches. If it looked as if we were vibrating on that stage, well, that was probably so. It felt like an enormous earthquake beneath your feet.

Once on that tour, Bob Matthews passed me on stage and said, "Follow me." He started up the towers with me close behind, and right in the center of the stage, behind a massive cluster of speakers, he had laid some plyboards that we could lie on. Peter 'Craze' Sheridan was on one of the boards already and Bob and I joined him. We could only signal to each other because the sound, as the band played, made it impossible to hear anything else. Soon, there was nothing to do but close my eyes and go with it. The music poured through my body and later I remarked to Phil Lesh that I had had the best seat in the house, and he looked at me and said, "No, Bob, actually, I think I had the best seat." Hard to argue with that!

We traveled east: Chicago, Illinois; Roanoke, Virginia; Hartford, Connecticut, and the tour smoothed out as we put the gear up and took it down. After the stage was erected in Hartford, I was sitting backstage in a small group surrounding Garcia as he fingered the familiar guitar, preparing himself for a concert

that was still hours away, and he asked, "How's it going, Bob? How do you like working the stages?"

"It's physical work, Jerry, but I'm strong and able to handle it. In fact, it's been a lot of fun so far and I thank you for that," I answered in truth, and then quickly added, "but, we're playing Roosevelt Stadium next week and it's a Full Moon. Hard to say what that might bring."

It was the only gig to be rained out on the tour and seventy thousand people stood in the deluge for hours waiting for the band who could not take the stage. Every time we uncovered the equipment here would come another downpour, but it wasn't a steady thing so that we could simply cancel, in a few minutes here would come the sunshine again; it was just back and forth.

Finally, we had to cancel and the band was rushed out in limousines as the irate fans began to throw bottles at the Emcee, and into the backstage area. The plyboard fence between the crowd and the backstage area began to weave back and forth, threatening to come down as the people rushed forward. Security backstage was in a panic, running this way and that, people were yelling, and one person passed in front of me bleeding from a head wound. We went from a calm to a battlefield.

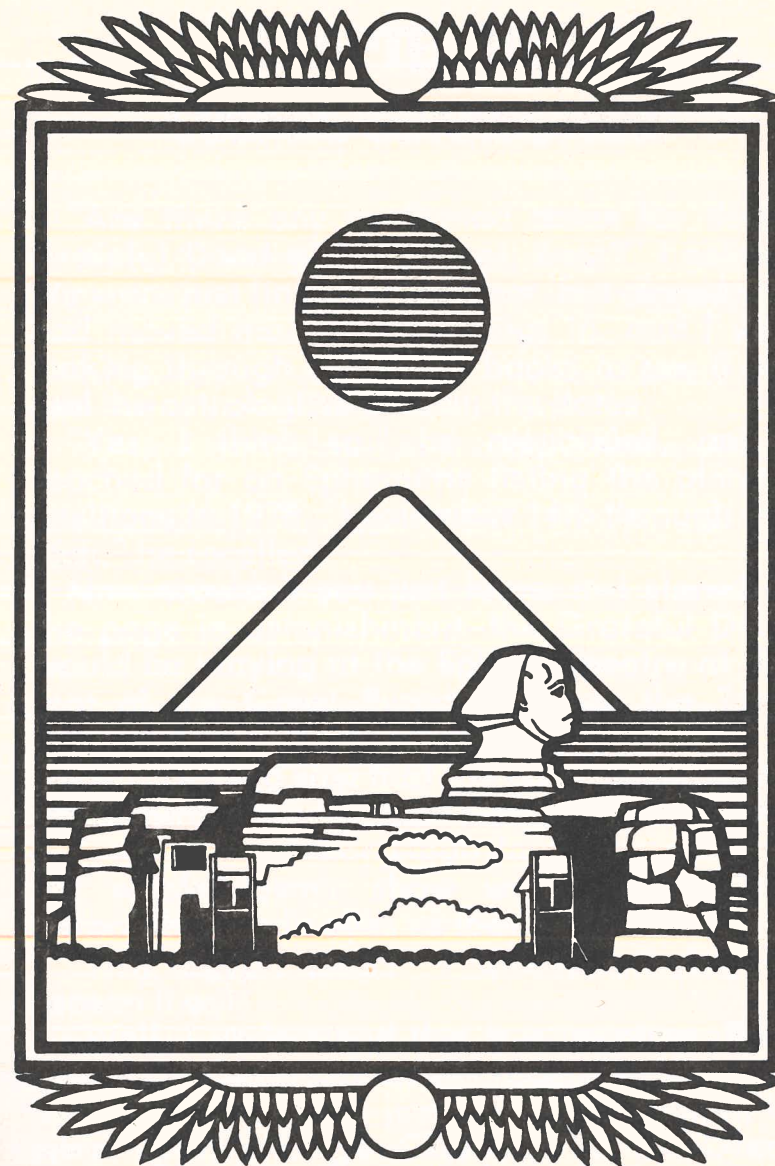
One of the limousines was pulling out from the backstage area and Rock Scully, our road manager at the time, said, "Jump in there, Bob, there's room! Get out of here!" I piled into the car and left the devastated area, wondering what the next Full Moon might bring, and hoping we'd be back home by then.

We did three days at the Civic Center in Philadelphia, and returned to make up the

rained-out gig at Roosevelt, all without a break. We were a beat bunch, catching cat-naps where we could--in the trucks, under the stage, anywhere. To me it was the best gig of all as the band tried to appease the same audience that had stood in the downpour just a few days earlier. They played "Uncle John's Band" in a very special way that day, and with tears streaming down my face, because this was the last gig of the tour, I was glad no one wanted to talk just then.

There were other reasons for the tears, too. I knew the end was really in sight. The day of the large rock concert was beyond its time. It was nearly impossible to get permits needed to stage the large concerts, and the concessions the band had to make to get the permits were bordering on insanity. They had to play at least ten feet above the heads of the people in some places, others wanted fire regulations strictly enforced and aisles kept clear down the center of the crowds. These people came to hear the music and dance; it was almost impossible to control such masses. Sixty five people were clubbed and arrested just for trying to see the band at Hartford. In order to keep the trip positive, the Grateful Dead would have to stop. They would, in fact, take a sabbatical, each do his own thing, and in time, it would be started up again.

The last concerts were filmed for the archives, and the massive sound system, years in the making, was dragged across country twice, then to Europe and finally because it had seen its day, laid to rest. The hundreds of people it took to present the Grateful Dead's shows were idled, and the end of an era passed, a legend had been witnessed by thousands.





CHAPTER TWO

COSMIC CONNECTION

"Are there any confirmed dates for those Grateful Dead gigs in Egypt, Bear?" I asked. We were just finishing the floor, but already he had moved many of his things in, and I was looking through a stack of books to see if we had the astrological data on the dates.

"Yes, I think so," he responded, and I reached for an Ephemeris listing the planets positions in 1978, "September 14th through the 16th," he recalled.

Now wouldn't you just know it--I stared at the page in astonishment--the Grateful Dead would be playing at the Sphinx Theatre at the foot of the Great Pyramid during the Total Eclipse of the Moon! We quickly drew up a hasty chart and saw that the band would be on stage during the full four hours it took for the Eclipse. The outdoor stage faces the east, so the whole cosmic show would occur right before the band's eyes as they performed.

"Why Egypt, Bear?" I queried, trying to reason it out.

"Well, I understand this is a vacation, Bob. They have been out on the road pretty steady lately, and this one's just for fun. They want to wire up the King's Chamber in the Great Pyramid and use it as an echo chamber - make it a part of their sound system."

The band members were very busy during the off period from '74 to '76, and many albums were produced, including, "Grateful Dead

from the Mars Hotel," and "Blues for Allah." Work was done on the film, and several bands evolved. Garcia released "Reflections," "Compliments of Garcia," and "Old and in the Way." Phil Lesh did "Seastones," and Keith and Donna produced their album. Mickey Hart did "Diga."

A good time was had by all, but something was missing, the magic was not the same, and they were anxious to make it happen again as the 'Grateful Dead.'

They made plans and talked it over. This time they would control the trip by playing to smaller crowds for several nights, and in that way reach the same number of people only not all at once.

They would need a smaller crew and much less equipment to cover the sound in the smaller halls, and this way maybe they could keep it from getting out of hand, from growing beyond control.

Those of us sidelined by this were in complete understanding and accord--at least we could hear the music again, and that had always been what the trip was about. The music was far too beautiful to be silenced, and letting it go personally so that the trip could go on was easy for most of us to do.

The Grateful Dead were playing the Orpheum Theatre on Market Street in San Francisco the next time I saw them. It was 1976, and the band had scaled the sound system down to what was needed for the small theatre. They were to perform six out of seven nights in a row to a very small crowd in an intimate setting. I really had a good time at those gigs, and it was truly wonderful to see everyone together again, even though half the backstage people seemed to be past Grateful

Dead employees. Proud was I to be among those ranks for it had been a pleasure to serve the band when they had a need. I left the last performance feeling once again as though I had just been highly entertained, and knowing that there was really nothing for me to do for them. They seemed to have it covered.

Rex Jackson, the band's road manager at the time, was killed in an automobile accident in 1976. He had been my earliest friend in the Grateful Dead crew after Bear introduced us, and we who knew him shared the loss.

The Grateful Dead were to play with The Who in October of that year, in one of Bill Graham's 'Day on the Green' concerts at the Oakland Coliseum, and through some friends I just happened to have tickets to the gigs. I didn't call the band to say I was coming, and as a result I wasn't on the guest list for the backstage area. The gigs normally began early and I was late getting there. It was impossible to even get near the backstage area and I ended up seeing the complete show from out in front with the rest of the people.

Great show, I might add, and the two groups truly complimented each other. I left feeling a little dejected--I mean, I couldn't even get backstage!

It was a two-day affair and the next morning I lay wondering if I would even go that day--it seemed I was losing ground in the rock 'n roll world.

Ring! Ring! Ring! went the telephone.

"Hi, Bob, this is Bear. Where were you yesterday?"

"Oh, I was there," I said, "but I just couldn't find anyone to let me in backstage."

"Are you coming today?" he asked.

"No, I don't think so," I answered.

"Aw, come on. I'll have your name on the list and it won't be any hassle. I promise. Do you know where to park your car? Go to the "K" section and say you're with the band, go right up the stairs and you can't miss it," he insisted.

"Okay," I answered, and thought, it's not easy to argue with the Bear.

With great reluctance, I drove into Oakland and parked my car. Just as I was getting out I saw Bob Matthews head up the stairs that Bear had described, and I called to him, "Hi, Bob."

"Hi, Bob," he answered, and added, "come on, let's walk up." He led me into the stage area, but it took a special pass to get on-stage and I was off to one side, looking down at the stage as the Dead went into their first song.

There were Bear and Isabelle standing behind Garcia and then our eyes met as Bear started making his way toward me holding out a pass and clearing the way through Security for me to enter the stage. We clasped hands, not trying to talk above the music, and he led me to stand right behind Garcia's set up.

To my surprise, Jerry turned and seeing me, simply lit up, smiling from ear to ear. He turned back to the crowd, now and again smiling at me as he turned my way. The song ended and my friend stepped toward me, stuck out his hand, and said, "Mr. Nichols!" I nodded, took his hand and said, "Mr. Garcia."

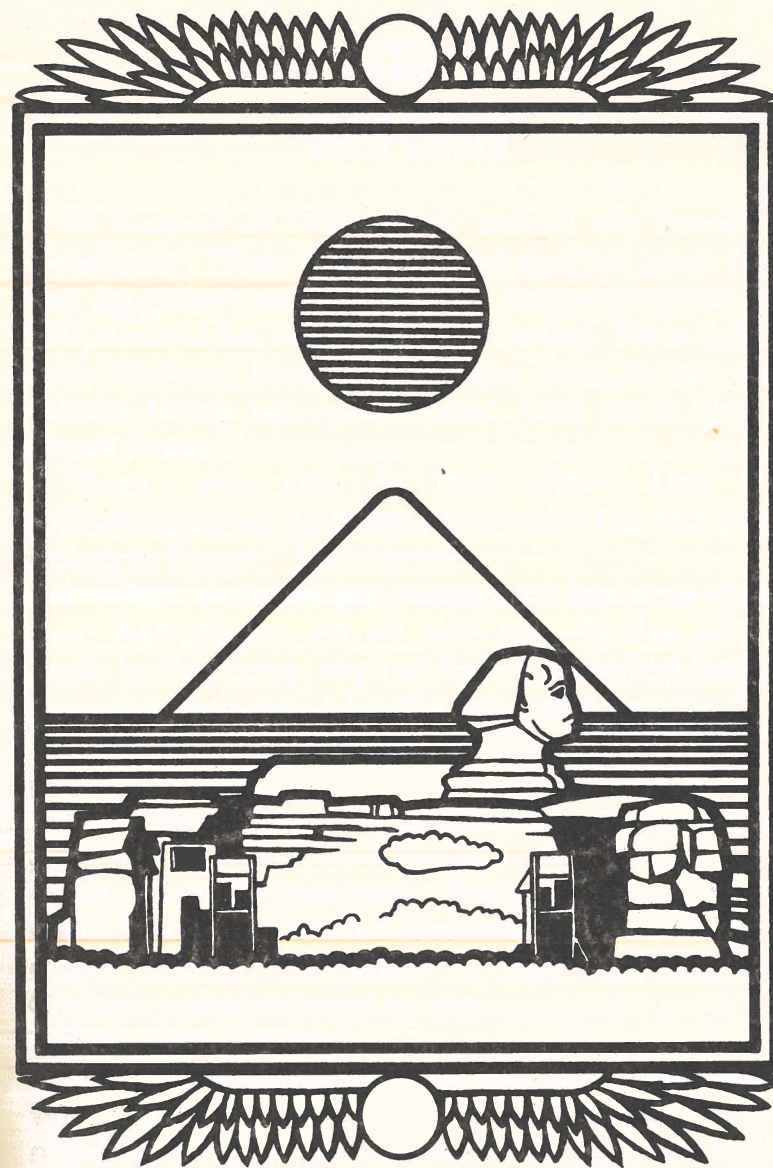
All this before 50,000 people! If that were not enough, and just to further blow my mind, listen to this. During one of the moments when I was just standing around backstage, near The Who's trailer, the door opened and out came Peter Townsend, the lead guitarist. He was with several people when he walked by me and glanced my way. He stopped, broke from his entourage, and came straight toward me

with his hand extended, saying, "It was sure a pleasure playing with you guys again."

Now all this, remember, after not being able to even get backstage the day before!

"Thank you, Mr. Townsend, it was a pleasure being here," I answered in truth, and shook his hand.

I drove home that day knowing that it didn't matter if I worked for the band or not, there was obviously some sort of cosmic connection that was beyond it all. I washed that hand about a week later, maybe it was ten days.





CHAPTER THREE

TRUCKIN'

In August of 1978, Bear called my home in Petaluma, "Bob, I mentioned to Phil Lesh that the Egyptian concerts were happening on an Eclipse and he was very interested. He worked with Richard Loren and Allan Trist to set this whole thing up, you know, and he'd like a chart done."

"Bear, you can do that chart. Use the calculations we had the other day. I'm not even going to Egypt," I protested.

I often encourage people to become their own Astrologer, as no one can do the job as well. In this case, my not being included began to come through. I finally relented and said I'd do the chart, just to end it, and conveniently put it out of my mind.

I had been working on a manuscript for the past few months, and though unpublished, the work showed promise. Bear had a copy of what I had completed and had passed it on to many friends. Somehow a copy had reached Garcia, unbeknownst to me.

Ring! Ring! Ring!

"Bob, this is Betar from the Grateful Dead. We're getting ready to go on the road and we need help. Can you come down to the studio and meet me?"

"I don't know...I...I guess so, sure. I'll be down."

I pulled into the parking lot of the warehouse and looked at the building. It gave

no outward appearance of anything you will find inside, and once inside it's still hard to realize at first how huge this place is because it is partitioned off into different areas. There are rolling doors on each side of the front door, and you enter into an outer office. Big Steve Parish sat behind a desk rolling a giant joint as I entered the room.

"Hey, Bob, how're ya doin'! I hear you're gonna' help us get it on the road," said my old friend, and I saw that someone had again cleared the way, because not much gets by Big Steve. He usually holds his own office right in that chair, and if you have no business there, that's about as far as you're likely to get. Steve is a big man and just his appearance is usually all the deterrent needed to discourage sightseers and over-zealous, well-meaning groupies. He has worked for the band since he was nineteen years old and is dedicated to the core.

"Yeah, I think Betar needs something," I trailed off.

"We all do," he said, and gave me that warm smile of acceptance.

Betar came from a side door into the office and said, "Oh, hi, Bob. Be with you in just a minute. Hang out," and she was gone. Betty Cantor is one of the many sound engineers who have grown with the Grateful Dead over the years, and is an expert in her field.

The rest of the crew began to drift into the studio--Ram Rod came in with John Hagen who began to fondle a basketball. Bill 'Kidd' Candelario rode up on his Harley, and parked right in the middle of the front door, being sure to rev his engine several times before shutting it down. He gets off the bike, comes in and plops down on the desk in front of Steve and

begins to insult the big man.

Billy Kreutzmann and Mickey Hart were the first musicians to arrive and they came with an artist who was to paint a decal on the new drum risers they had designed. Steve and Kidd began arguing over the size of some fish one of them had caught.

A big German shepherd came through the door and I was sure Bob Weir would be shortly in tow. Otis takes him almost everywhere they go, and Otis is a Prankster. He is a grand old dog who's about as close to human as you're likely to meet. He's very familiar to this scene and though he has quite a few years on him there remains a lot of puppy.

"Hi Otis," Big Steve says, and asks, "Did you bring Weir with you?" Bob comes in looking sheepish and everyone yells greetings to him.

"Show this guy where the drum risers are, Stevie," Hart introduces the artist and they disappear through a door leading to the back.

I got up and walked around the room to stretch my legs, and decided to head out to the parking lot for some sunshine. I was standing just outside the front door when Garcia rode up with Rock Scully at the wheel of the car.

"Hi, Bob," says Jerry, "I've been looking for you. Man, that's some book you've written. I mean, it's really good. That's one of the best books I've ever read. You keep writing, you can really tell a story, and I compliment you."

I was dumbfounded as he turned past me and went inside, and I look up and he's back, "I mean it's really good, Bob. I know, I know I'm embarrassing you with all this praise, but I do want you to know how very much I enjoyed your book."

The big rolling doors slid up, the artist was hunched over the drum risers, drawing the

familiar skull that is the Grateful Dead.

"Thank you, Mr. Garcia, I am indeed humbled by your praise, for none comes higher," I said as I flushed with emotion.

We stepped inside together just in time to hear Kreutzmann and Steve mumble something about the "Godfather" showing up, or maybe it was "Cult Leader" with loud snickers all around us as the energy picked up. Someone had tied a bright red handkerchief around Otis' head, one eye peeked out and the other was covered. "Wonder what he'd look like if he had a ring around that eye?" Kreutzmann asked Weir as he reached for a felt-tipped pen, and circled the exposed eye. "Things are definitely getting out of hand here, as usual," says Jerry and heads for the back room studio.

Soon music drifted out from the studio and I got up and moved toward the sound.

The building is pretty much divided down the middle at Le Club Front, with a sound studio on the left and storage on the right. The band has a lot of gear, to state it simply! It's been acquired over the years and is still more or less around--in boxes, in crates, stacked up in great piles, constantly being rummaged through by Ram Rod or some other roadie saying, "I know it's in here somewhere..." Some of it gets sorted out, but other piles are growing and the continuous process goes on.

The studio side is kept more organized and the equipment in use is very elaborate. At least seven albums have come from this warehouse/home/studio, but you must remember that the Dead are into the electronics end of their business, and they use the very best--the very latest in everything available. They go to great extremes to build

and develop their instruments, amplifiers and speakers with cabinets--with everything becoming a prototype, one of a kind, sometimes taking thousands of dollars and years to develop. The storage side becomes the home of the outdated, or maybe a needed part in the future--possibly resurrection!

I entered the storage side and walked up on Phil Lesh talking with a man I didn't know. "Bob, have you met Rob Taylor?" Phil introduced us, and added, "He is our road manager now that Scully is involved with the record company." I shook hands with the big guy, and noted his broad forehead, thinning hair and very warm smile. Phil went on with the conversation saying, "I understand there is a Full Moon or something like that during the gigs in Egypt--is that so?"

"Even better, Phil," I responded, remembering that I hadn't done the chart he wanted, "it's an Eclipse!"

Otis walked in and saved me--the bandana and dark circle around his eye were hilarious, and we all broke up again. I've got to do that chart before these guys leave town, I thought, but we still have a couple of days. The equipment truck would have to go in front of the band by at least two days and it hadn't even been loaded yet.

Things were starting to happen, roadies were moving from room to room and boxes were being stuffed and latched. Road gear was being readied. The schedule called for two days at the Red Rocks Amphitheatre, just outside Boulder, Colorado, and then several dates on the East Coast before leaving for Cairo, Egypt. They planned to truck the equipment to Red Rocks and then fly everything to the East Coast.

"Hey, Bob," yelled Big Steve from across the room, "give me a hand with these drums." Betar goes by but she still has no time: we can do it later. We strap the drum cases and Steve says, "We may not get everything into one truck anymore." He looked at the heap being piled before the rolling door and then at the new drum risers, still drying with fresh paint. "Ram Rod! Ram Rod! We got problems!"

"Yeah, Stevie, I see what you mean," says Ram Rod. Steve looks at me, lights up wide eyes and says, "You ever drive a truck?"

"Well, no," I hesitated, "I don't know. I...I don't think so. Maybe, yeah sure, why not?" As the proposition became clear, I did an about-face.

"That may be the only way," says Ram Rod, adding, "I'll talk to Taylor."

"When do the trucks have to leave?" I asked.

"Early tomorrow morning," said Steve, "if we can get them loaded out tonight."

Candelario does the keyboard set-up and his gear was already by the door, neatly organized and ready to go. He was poking fun at the other roadies, saying that if they didn't get it together he was going to leave before loadout.

"We need another truck," says Steve.

"And two more drivers because we can't send the gear out with only one man in each truck," Ram Rod was quick to add.

"What happened to my sonar tube?!!" screamed Mickey Hart, as he stared toward the ceiling. We all turned to look at the empty space in the rafters where the tube had hung. Willy Legate, who is an old-timer around this scene, and current custodian of the studio, was standing there looking upward also and

mumbled, "Oh that's what that was. I thought it was just something someone forgot to take down." He leaned on his broom, staring off into space, "What do you think of that.!"

"I think you better get my tube back up there, that's what I think! And, it had better be done before we come home from Egypt! Or else I'll have you strung up! Maybe maimed!" Mick threatened, but he winked at me as he caught my eye with a mischievous glint.

The sonar tube had been designed, in concept, by Mickey Hart to progress in diameter for some fifty feet, with an electric train on tracks inside, controlled electronically and equipped with a microphone so that sound could be recorded along the length of the tube for sound variation.

Peter Sheridan walked by me and said, leaning close to my ear, "I hear you wrote a book! Now, remember I'm in Hollywood, good ol' road buddy, and I'm doing some bit parts now, but I'd be great in a lead." He gave me a big wink and moved on.

"Yeah, sure, Craze. I'll keep that in mind."

"What's this?" Steve reaches into a road box and holds up two very mutilated, very old radios. The common kind, like you might find in any home twenty years ago or probably even longer.

"Healy!" he yells. Dan Healy sticks his head out from a nearby doorway and says, "Yeah, yeah, those are mine," and he quickly grabs them from Steve like a protected toy.

"In MY road case!" said Steve.

Dan Healy runs the P.A. system at Grateful Dead gigs and he works with the band to achieve the sound the audience will hear. He is another who grew up with the band and is greatly respected in his field, having

engineered or co-produced most of their albums.

The sound system employed by the Dead is actually two different systems. One is the monitors which allow the band to hear themselves and are controlled from the side of the stage by another engineer, Harry Popick, with direct contact to each musician. The other system is the public address 'P.A.' system that the audience hears and is the part controlled by Dan Healy.

Like many other heavy electronic engineers, Dan gets wired on the energy sometimes. After long tours, and longer hours, plus the constant pressure from having to work so many different halls under so many different conditions, when he finally gets home he can't come down. He says sometimes it takes him days to rid himself of the pressure. So, as he tours with the band from city to city, he collects old radios from hock shops, flea markets, and used furniture stores; somehow they just come to him. To unwind from this pressure, Dan will spend hours restoring these relics to their original quality and then neatly wrap them in plastic and store them away. He must have hundreds.

"Hi, Bob," says Dan, "I hear you're going out with us. Good, Good. Have you met John Cutler?"

Cutler is a medium-sized man with a navy peacoat on, his hands were shoved down in the pockets, collar up. He was looking at me through eyeglasses about as thick as the bottoms of coke bottles.

"Nichols," said Cutler and as we shook hands, I noticed he was trembling, just a little.

"Cutler designed the apparatus that we're going to use on the King's Chamber," con-

tinued Healy, they were apparently discussing this as they were bent over plans and drawings that were unmistakably the Pyramid.

"Nichols, this is Faust, David Faust," said Ram Rod, "you two can drive the second truck. This is Jerry Durham and Larry Reuckshinitis, they will be in the first truck."

"Just call me 'Fast'," said Faust, and I saw I was in trouble already. He was a skinny little guy that was just bouncing with energy--in motion, you might say, and when pressed for a reason for being so wired he said the Marines made him that way. One thing, he was not lazy, he was everywhere--now you see him, now you don't, he was just here--there he goes.

Jerry Durham was a young black man who had been raised on the fringes of the Grateful Dead family and was still pretty much of a kid--but a strong one and that can be handy around the heavy, bulky equipment.

Larry had worked for Mickey on the side, and had helped build and install the sonar tube. He was loud with a big forehead, receding hairline, and a quick, if a bit strange, wit.

"Nichols," said Rob Taylor as he filled my hand with money, "here is road money for both you and Faust and enough to take a truck to Red Rocks. Keep receipts for me. The gear flies to the east after the Red Rocks gigs and we will fly you home from there. Ryder Trucks is holding a rig and you should pick it up right away. Here is a couple of phone numbers where you can reach me, and you should call me if you have any problems along the way. I can always be of help somehow," he assured me.

Things were happening fast. By the time

Faust and I returned, the first truck was pulling out, so we backed right in for our load--well, maybe not right in, but we finally did do it after three or four tries. Ram Rod stood with hands on hips, wondering.

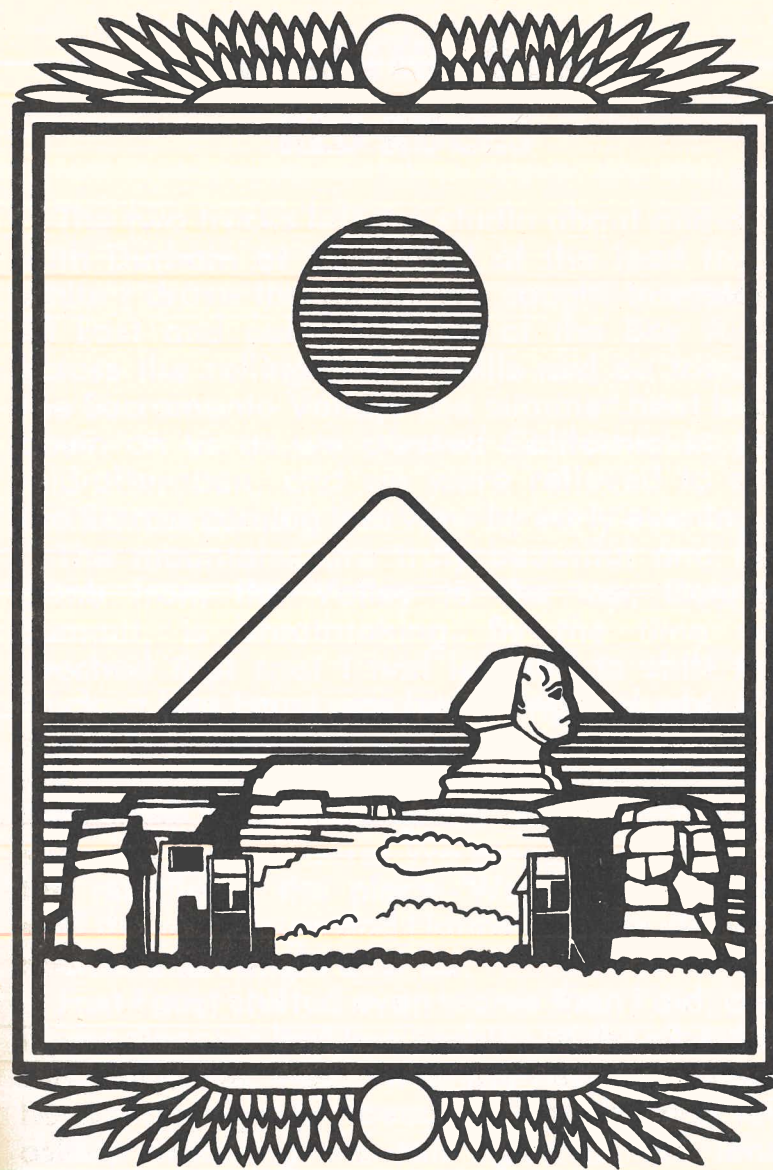
Gear was coming at me as quick as I could take it, and Faust, while willing, was not so strong. I was glad to see Hagen climb onto the truck. "You go help bring it," he said to Faust, and to me, "get ahold of that end."

It was midnight when we finished and we pulled the trucks inside, agreeing to meet and depart at 8 a.m. As I passed through the office, headed for the parking lot, Bob Weir caught my attention, and said, "What kind of running shoes are those?"

"Puma's," I answered, wondering what he really wanted, and looked at him.

"Nice shoes," he said, and then, "Say, I hear you're going to do some driving for us, and I was wondering if maybe," he searched for words, "you know, Otis is getting pretty old and I hate having to leave him all the time, and I was thinking that maybe if there was a seat in the truck..." he trailed off.

"I bet he'd make a great road buddy, Bob," I said, adding, "but on this one I've got another driver and besides, I'm not sure if I'm even going with you past Red Rocks. I think they intend to fly the gear from that point."





CHAPTER FOUR

RED ROCKS

The two trucks left the studio about mid-day with Durham at the wheel of the lead truck while I drove the other. We caught Interstate 80 East and pulled up out of the Bay Area across the rolling coastal hills and on toward the Sacramento Valley. The summer heat beat down on us as we crossed California in the mid-afternoon, and we were relieved to see the Sierras coming into view by early evening.

The mountains are truly beautiful and the climb from the Valley to the top, Donner Summit, is breathtaking. By the time we reached that spot I had learned to shift the truck--a feat Faust was beginning to doubt, I'm sure. Not too much one can say about Nevada, it's there and you have to cross it, but the sagebrush and nothingness of the flat land soon becomes a bore. We stopped for fuel in the middle of the place--'Wabuska, Nevada' said the proud sign and I knew I was as close to nowhere as I might ever be.

Fast Faust shifted even worse than I did, and it was clear we had two rookies at the wheel of this truck. Oh, well, what the heck, not much he can damage in Nevada, I thought, and fell asleep watching the tail lights of the lead truck.

"This truck keeps over-heating!" Faust yelled over the engine noise, and I tried to pull myself back to consciousness. "Huh?" I rubbed my eyes.

"The engine is hot!" he screamed. We had crossed into Utah and Faust was pulling up a steep grade. He was obviously in the wrong gear and the engine was lugging under the strain.

"Shift down!" I screamed. He just looked at me and froze. "Faust," I yelled again, "shift down!" He threw it into neutral and then, could find nothing. He jammed the shift lever into some hole and popped the clutch--I thought for sure we had lost the transmission. I don't know what gear he was in, but boy, talk about coming to a dead stop--I mean we stopped right there!

"Maybe you better watch me for a while, Fastie," I said, "give me that wheel." I came out of that sleep the quick way. In a few miles the truck temperature returned to normal and I realized the trouble was in the driver.

Daylight came upon us as we travelled the rolling plains of Wyoming. We saw antelope herds grazing on the distant hills. The Rockies began to loom in the far distance, with iridescent greens and red-earth tones, and one can quickly see that Colorado was aptly named.

Faust offered to lead us to the hotel in Denver where we were to spend the night. In the morning we would do the load-in at Red Rocks Amphitheatre. "It's right down this street, I know it is. Yeah, yeah, well anyway, I thought it was--maybe it's the next one over."

I'm tired and lost and this is my leader! "Faust, if it ain't the next one over I'm going to make you get out and I'm going to run over you!" At that moment I saw Steve Parish lean out the window of a rental car, wave and motion for us to follow. And just in time, I thought, as we pulled into the hotel parking

lot.

Loud cheers greeted us from the balcony of a room about five floors up and I looked to see most of the band waving and jeering at us. "Well, I see you can find Colorado, Bob," yelled Candelario. The crew and band had arrived on an earlier flight. I couldn't wait to have a shower, some food and a clean bed, in that order.

Like Colorado, Red Rocks is aptly named. It is a natural open-air amphitheatre that was carved out of two giant red stones which protrude out of the ground and point to the skies. The work was done during the depression era by WPA workers and was some four years in the making. It is impressive, with the stage and all seating hand-carved out of the red rock. From the upper seating area the view is spectacular with the Great Rockies to the west and the valley of Denver to the east. You are, as it were, on the top of a mountain. The accoustics in the amphitheatre are said to be near perfect, and many famous musicians have used the place to record, or just to play. The drive from Denver to Red Rocks is perhaps thirty miles, and I was amazed by the countryside--the reds are so red, the greens so alive and the mountains were the prettiest I'd ever seen.

Security at the Amphitheatre directed me to a parking spot for the truck. It was a long way up the hill to the stage and I tried to imagine how all this gear was going to get up that hill. We'll see.

I walked up the hill toward the stage area and the place was a bustle of activity. Light crews were working amidst sound crews, and security was being planned: people were running this way and that, carrying cables and

yelling back over their shoulders. Rob Taylor saw me and came forward with his hand out, "How was it? Did you have a good trip? Where is the truck?" and, "This is Jeff Boden, an old friend, who's going to help me with some of the things I don't have time for."

Jeff is a large man, heavy-set with a mean face, I mean a MEAN face with a big scar that runs down one eye. One look is all you need to know that here is a man you want on your side.

"Hi, Bob," says Jeff. The voice is warm and surprisingly soft, "I'll help you get that truck in. It's a tough one, you have to back up almost straight uphill. Then, you have to come around two sharp turns, and on the last one, you have to hit the wall a little bit."

I looked at the ramp he was talking about, and a lump formed in my throat. Man, that was tight with a steep dropoff on one side. It looked about half-suicidal!

"This guy will take you down to the parking lot for the truck, Bob," said Jeff. He was pointing to a local stagehand who drove a little golf cart down the hill while I held on for the wild ride to the bottom, the lump growing larger in my throat.

My mouth was so dry I could hardly answer as he offered, "I'll put that truck up there for you, if it won't hurt your feelings, 'cause I do it almost every day, and I know just how to come off that wall."

Faust and I grinned to each other as the stagehand did just as he said he would. I was thanking him when Ram Rod walked by, and remembering my attempts to back up to the studio, asked, "How did you get that truck up here?" He obviously didn't know and with a wink to the stagehand, I said, "A little bank shot, Ram Rod, right off that rock there!"

The truck unloaded quickly as Faust tried to make up for his driving skills and we parked in a designated area for the two days we were to be at the Amphitheatre.

In the early days the Grateful Dead provided everything needed to produce their shows, including the lights and the public address system. When they saw they had to scale down the size of the large entourage it took to erect and operate these things they began to contract the work to outside companies. As the set-up takes place there are crews working within crews. In record time it all starts to take shape, the apparent confusion becomes well-organized as wires are stretched taut and taped to the floor. Speaker columns rise on the stage, and amps are removed from their cases. Some two dozen stagehands remove the empty cases and do anything else to help: as many as fifty people are moving around on the stage.

"Bob," Betar calls to me, "I still need that little box built onto the end of my set-up. Can you help me with that?" She begins to demonstrate with her hands just what it is she wants, and I see Big Steve watching us. "Hey, Steve!" I yell across the stage to him, "got a hammer I can use? I need to build this box for Betar."

"No! Well, maybe. You see, Bob, it's like this, I'm kind of mad at her, but I don't want to not loan you my hammer, so now what do I do? Oh, go ahead and take it and I'll just have to pretend not to see."

I knew that he was joking, and it startled me to hear Garcia's voice say, "What's this about MY hammer, Stevie?"

"Aw, nothin', Jer, I was just givin' Bob a hard time," said the big man as he flushed. Jerry looked at me, smiled and said, "Everything is

always mine, mine, mine." The good-natured chiding had a message.

I watched the rest of the musicians take the stage, and each began testing their instruments for the mid-afternoon sound check. I looked for some small pieces of wood for the box as Jerry took his guitar from its case and began to tune it. He spends hours each day with the instrument in his hands and once told me that even if he missed only a day or two of playing he could tell it when he picked it back up again. That's the only way you can keep that fine line--maintain that peak!

Bob Weir was changing a guitar string and it was waving crazily as he worked to get it off. Keith and Donna smiled to me as they came on stage. She stood nearby as he started running chords over the ivory keys. At this point the stage set-up is mostly together and quite impressive. The lights were being adjusted and the P.A. tested. The energy was definitely on the increase. The random noise the band members were making began to take some form as Steve and Hagen worked feverishly around the drum set-up. I'd never seen so many drums, not even in the early days, and I asked Ram Rod what the trip was. "It's a concept designed by Mickey and Billy that we have dubbed 'The Beast'," he answered, "and the idea is to suspend the drums, rather than set them up."

The band broke into song and I walked out front to where the audience would be, to hear what the sound was like. Jeff Boden was talking with several Security people and they were trying to explain to him just how they were going to secure this mountain top. "We're all sold out," I overheard, "and there is a

group of them down the hill that are threatening to charge the gate! Look! Look!" he shouted and pointed at the rocks above the theatre. "There are some guys up there! They'll kill themselves!" All of a sudden I was glad to be the truck driver--Jeff was going to have his hands full.

All day dark threatening clouds drifted across the skies overhead. There was only a chance of rain, or so the local weather report stated, and I wondered about that because there was a definite feel of rain. I walked back toward the stage, past the nervous Security force who appeared to be getting more worked up by the minute, and heard mutterings of, "...and, it looks like it's gonna' rain!" The band ended the sound test after playing two or three songs and I saw Weir fighting another string.

The floor level below the stage is where the dressing rooms are, and there is a main room where food had been catered. A long table displayed the delicious feast and a bar had been stationed nearby for drinks. The special stage pass was the meal ticket. Since most of us had been there all day, everyone had gathered around the long table and the feast was rapidly disappearing.

Small dressing rooms lead off the main one and people were coming and going from one to another so I started peeking into them to see what was going on. The first room appeared to be the Security Office and as I opened the door I heard, "Yes! Yes, we need an ambulance up here! One of these crazy kids took a nose dive!"

I shut that door and opened the next one. "Hi, Bob," says Garcia, "come on in."

"Hi, Jer," I greeted him, "how ya' doing?"
"I'm okay. My throat has been a little raspy but I think it's getting better." He showed me a warm smile.

"Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't know," I said and took a seat across the room. Jerry was on a couch with others seated randomly around the small room. Phil Lesh sat next to Jerry and I turned to him, saying, "What a beautiful place to play, with the mountains in the background and all."

"Yes," he agreed, "it's one of our favorite places, and we've been here a couple of times before, but this time it looks like it could rain."

"Bob, didn't you say we were playing Egypt on a Full Moon, or an Eclipse? Did you compile that astrology chart?" Phil pressed me, "I asked Bear to have you do it."

"Tell us about it," Jerry said, showing great interest, pitched me the lead, and here I was without an instrument--I had not done the chart.

"Yes, Phil, the last gig, I think it is," and I reached into my memory, "is an Eclipse, and Bear and I did a rough draft, but I didn't get around to completing a chart. I will." I groped for words, "I can get one to you in New York before you leave the country." I tried to find a way.

"You know how likely I am to get a hotel message, Bob. It's too late now. I really wanted that chart done." I sank in the chair feeling just as I should have.

"TEN MINUTES TO SHOW TIME!" Rob Taylor warns as he sticks his head in the doorway. Again, the level of energy took a leap. Jerry leans back and continues to stroke his guitar. The chords take on another level, repeating more intricately with each step and I can do nothing but go with it. He smiles and knows

he's got me--there is a new note added as he takes me out a little farther. Enchanting!

"SHOW TIME!" Ten minutes had passed in seconds! I walked out just behind the band and up the steps to the stage as the lights dimmed: the people rose from their seats with a thundering applause, and the GRATEFUL DEAD WERE IN CONCERT! I felt the wave of energy knock me out of my body, and I knew why I would drive a truck, or do anything else for this band: for the MAGIC in the air!

Before the first song ended it began to drizzle, and the crew hurriedly covered amps and all the electrical gear they could. The band never missed a note and long after I thought they should have stopped, they were still playing! Ram Rod stood watching an amp steam! I swear to you. I know electrical things don't act that way, but there it was. The rain stopped after a while, but everything was soaking wet, and Bob Weir broke another string.

I found a seat out of the way and watched the band perform. I've played this game before and it always blows my mind. I watch each individual musician and try to reason out where the energy is, exactly, which one of these people is really holding this all together. But you can never pinpoint where it all comes from because each performer is a master at his task.

Bob Weir shines, man, he really does! He sings with his entire body, and his throat muscles bulge and become taut, and you know he's got everything in it. By the end of the first set he's soaked, whether it's raining or not!

The Grateful Dead are notorious for playing long performances, long songs and taking long breaks. The shows were advertised to last four

hours, with one break usually somewhere near the middle. I stayed on stage when they broke at the end of the first set, hanging out with Big Steve.

"You know this is the maiden flight of 'The Beast,' don't you, Bob?" Steve asked, saying, "This is the first time it's been out of the studio."

I looked at the mass of percussion equipment before us and was truly boggled. First of all, there are two drummers in the band so there are two of everything. The percussion set-ups are placed on a riser two feet above the floor of the stage and behind them stand "The Beast"--a steel frame shaped in a circle, ten feet across. A top row of drums are suspended some eight feet off the stage, and below them, waist-high, are more drums set into this frame. Several people can stand inside and play simultaneously.

The band came out for the second set, and Steve motioned me to a seat with a clear view of the stage, and especially of the drums. "They're gonna' beat them drums tonight, Bob, you just watch and see," he says to me.

And they did! Boy, was it something. Early into the set the other musicians just left the stage and turned the whole show over to the two percussionists. For at least fifteen minutes the two 'talked' to each other and to the audience with a beat that went from a light touch to a thundering crescendo. They loved it, we loved it, The Beast certainly got a workout, and the Grateful Dead got a new addition--a new member. The percussion breaks were always a highlight of the performances, but with this thing, there were no limits! The band completed the concert with the

audience on its feet, and the last note hung in the air, no one wanting to let that moment go. Once again I had been thoroughly entertained.

Faust and I left the truck parked and caught a ride to the hotel in Denver with Dan Healy in a rental car. There was a hospitality suite at the hotel and for that matter parties in every room probably, but what I wanted was some sleep. This was all going to happen again tomorrow, and I mean, how much can one take in a single night!

The second day at Red Rocks went smoothly and there were no weather threats. Well, pretty smooth--the crew forgot they had truck drivers, and it was mid-afternoon when I finally walked down to the lobby to see where everyone was. No one answered the room phones--Faust was on a house phone in the lobby. "Where is everyone?" he asks me, "They want fifty bucks for a cab out to Red Rocks and everyone else has gone."

"I see two limos out front", I said, "What about one of those?"

"They are for Garcia and Weir, the only ones still here. I think I'll call Weir," Faust said, still with the phone in hand.

"Jump in, Nichols," Faust shouts to me, "Weir said we could have his limo and he'll ride with Jerry." The long, sleek black limousine put us out right at the backstage door and a cute little groupie, who I am sure was expecting to see Bob Weir, said, "Must be nice." I laughed and thought if she only knew I had actually arrived in a truck!

Sounds were coming from the stage area and it was obvious that the equipment check was in progress. The scene was much more together on stage and people were standing in

small groups watching the musicians tune their instruments. Big Steve was watching the drummers with one eye and everything else going on at the same time with the other. "We get our gear out of here first, Nichols," he said to me, "and you have that truck at the back door as soon as the gig is over."

"I got it, Stevie."

"Jer don't feel so good," he added, "his throat is even worse today."

We stayed on stage until the sound check was over and then everyone headed for the food. The mood was relaxed and even Security seemed more at ease today. "You have that truck right at the back door, Nichols," said Jeff Boden as he saw me.

"I got it, Jeff." I watched him give instructions to a runner who was going after various small articles, and on the list was a pair of pants for John Hagen!

"Yeah," said Jeff, obviously irritated, "a pair of pants for Hagen! He decided not to bring any clothes on this tour and is going to buy them as he goes along, throwing the dirty ones away. Can you believe it?!"

I tried one of the doors leading off the dining room and there was Mickey Hart sitting on a small couch with a drum practice pad and a set of drumsticks.

"Come in, Nichols," he greeted me with a smile, and asked, "Do you have a match?" He passed me a huge joint and made room for me to join him on the couch. All this time he never stopped beating on the pad and the rhythm continued more intricate as he warmed up for the coming show. I tried small talk for a minute and then realized he wasn't really into that, so we just sat and smoked--I got caught up in what he was doing. He picked the practice pad

up in one hand and held the drumsticks with the other. The pad was thick in the center and thinned out to the edge forming about a twelve inch circle. He held the center and waved the outer edges back and forth around my head. The effect was astounding as he increased the beat and I could feel the sound flowing over my being.

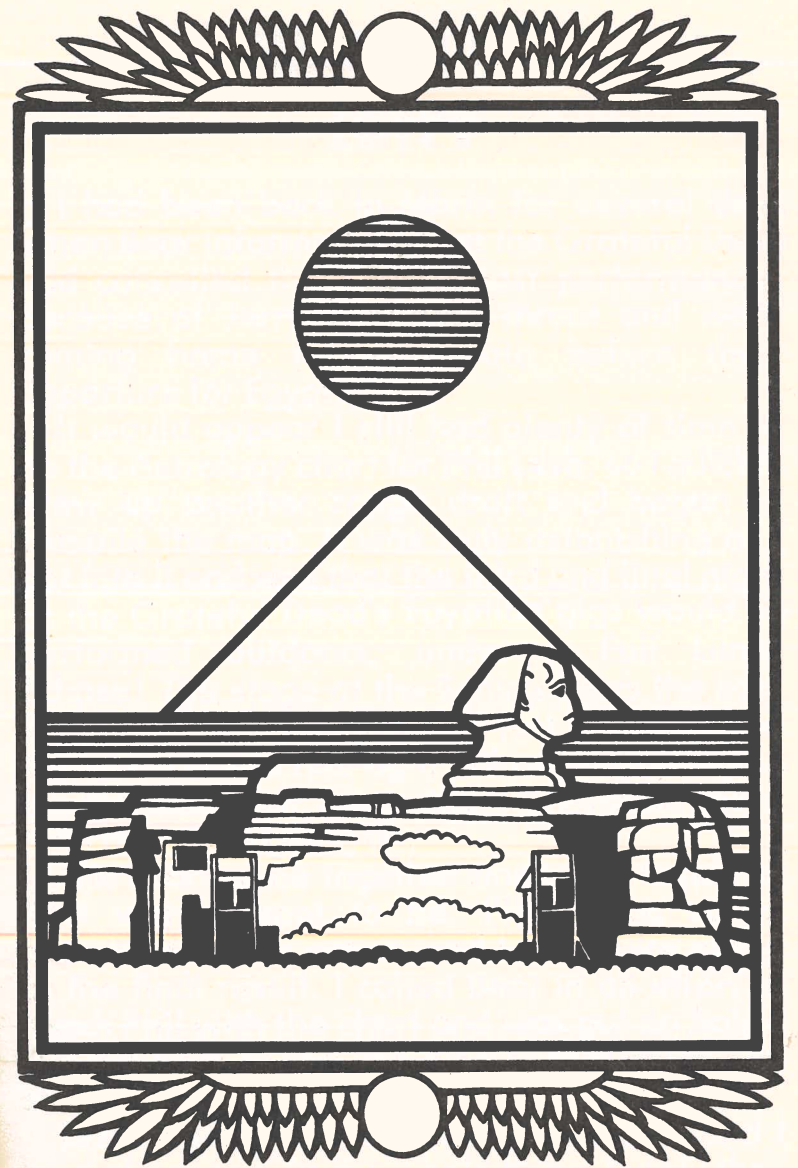
"Five minutes to showtime, Mick," Rob Taylor called through the door, and I tried to get back into my body. Mick, however, never missed a beat as he got up and headed for the door.

I stood on the stage next to Ram Rod, and he said, "Be sure to have that truck at the back door as soon as this show is over. We get our gear out first, before the lights, or anything."

"I got it, Ram Rod."

The second night was definitely the better of the two days, but it is often that way, the first night being a warm-up for the grand finale. I stayed on stage during the set break, and John Hagen urged me to have the truck at the back door. He also said the 'no laundry' routine was working great. "Just think of the headaches it saves me," he said.

The Beast got a workout during the second set, and I truly enjoyed the whole show. This was it for me, however, because as soon as we could get the gear to the airport I was to turn in the truck and fly home. This was as far as my ticket went. Ram Rod gave me a big handshake and a hug when we were done. Now, there is a guy that can really make you feel warm, even if you are being left behind. Well, so much for the Pyramids, I thought, at least it had sure been fun up to now.





CHAPTER FIVE

EGYPT

I had been back in Marin for several days when Bear informed me that the Grateful Dead had cancelled their East Coast performances because of Jerry's irritated throat and were coming home to recuperate before their departure for Egypt.

It would appear I still had plenty of time to do the Astrology chart for Phil Lesh, so I quickly drew up another rough draft and began to compile the map. It was truly astonishing as I got into it and saw that the third and final night of the Grateful Dead's Egyptian gigs would be performed outdoors, under a Full Lunar Eclipse! The stage at the Sphinx faces the east and the Eclipse would occur just at sunset, so the moon would rise right in front of the band--for the next four hours there would be more than one show going on.

The chart came together under my hands as if it were meant to be. Flourishing colors appeared on the paper, and I was quite proud of the final result. I called Bear in an effort to reach Phil with the chart and was put on hold--"I'll get back to you. Hold on to that chart," he said.

Days went by with nothing--no word, and I kind of gave up on the whole thing. Surely they had all left for Egypt by this time.

Ring! Ring! Ring!

"Bob, this is Bear. Travel Advisors of Marin, Randy Sarti, has a ticket for you to Egypt as

part of a tour leaving from San Francisco Airport tomorrow morning at 7 AM! Bring that chart and meet me at my house at about six-- I'm going to try to be ready," he added.

"Bear, I have twenty-two dollars to my name!" I started to protest. "Bring that, too!" he said, and hung up the phone.

There were many familiar faces at the airport. The band was not part of this tour, but it was apparent that many of their extended family were: Ken Kesey, his family, the Pranksters, Paul Krassner, and many other Deadheads waited to board the flight to New York where we would change planes for the long trip to Cairo, Egypt.

We had a short layover in New York and Bear asked to see the chart. We studied it for a few minutes and he said, "Come with me." We walked across the terminal to a crowd of people, more or less gathered around Ken Kesey. Bear introduced me to Ken and then to Paul Krassner. The chart was passed around and Ken asked, "Could we do an interview with you and the chart in Egypt?" He explained, "We have a film crew with us, and once we recover from the jet lag, perhaps we can get together." "Sure, I'd love to," I agreed.

We picked up the East Coast contingent of Deadheads and family in New York to round out our entourage. It all made for a very loose flight on to Cairo, as one group toward the back of the plane lit a hash pipe--soon, someone else lit a joint and in almost no time we were at high altitudes in more ways than one. It was a long flight and my legs were cramped from lack of seat space. What little sleep I did get was restless, the long hours dragged on and I felt weightless, spacey and drifty.

Landing in Cairo felt even stranger! I was not ready for Egypt or the Arabs, I assure you. On reflection, I know it was culture shock--I could just as easily have been in another universe. The men wore long flowing garments with small black skull caps, or once-white turbans wound around their heads. The women were veiled with a heavy black cloth completely covering all but their eyes. Everyone and everything seemed dusty--the color of the desert, and appeared dirty.

We passed through Customs easily and headed for buses and the ride to the hotel. As we left the terminal we walked down a ramp lined with Egyptians, who were leaning on the fence separating us, yelling as they pushed against the fence, "Baksheesh! Baksheesh! Baksheesh!" They were, to be sure, a hungry-looking bunch.

The Mena House Oberoi Hotel at Giza is about fifteen miles outside of Cairo. The travel brochure described the hotel as a sprawling forty-acre complex with ornamental gardens, the largest swimming pool in Saudi Arabia, and located at the foot of the Great Pyramid. Truth was, all I wanted was a bed, I was beat tired.

It was late afternoon when we reached the hotel which was very European and well-tended. Our tour was to undergo an orientation lecture while we waited for our assigned rooms and keys. Still in shock, the most I can recall from that lecture is, "Don't drink the water!" Finally the room keys arrived--I was to share a double room. I fumbled with the key in the lock, but to no avail. Twelve thousand miles I'd travelled and was about to fall asleep right there in the hallway.

"Hello!" he said from behind me, "You must

be Bob Nichols. I'm Courtenay Pollack, your roommate." He spoke with a British accent and was a handsome man of about thirty. I extended my hand and looked into his clear, blue eyes and felt his warmth.

"This door is stuck," I said.

"Here, let me try that," and he inserted the key and gave the door a swift kick. It flew open, much to my surprise! "It's all in the feet," he said. At last a bed, I thought.

I awoke at sunrise, but Courtenay was already gone. I found the shower and afterwards stepped through sliding glass doors onto the balcony. The Great Pyramid of Cheops beckoned to me from up the hill, magnificent in the morning light! I was awestruck by its being.

A continental breakfast was included in the tour package and was served in one of the hotel's four restaurants. There was almost no one in the dining room and I realized I was probably a little ahead of the others.

Feeling good after the sleep and food, and not wanting to waste any time, I started for the Pyramid. The hotel complex is walled and guarded and I later learned that local Egyptians are not allowed inside on the grounds. As I passed through the gates I walked into the heart of waiting Egypt. There were people everywhere with every kind of contraption being pulled by donkeys. There were camels loitering and tour buses arriving in a continuous stream. Cars honked insistently as they tried to weave through the crowds. Everyone seemed to be yelling at me all at once, "Mister! Mister! Ride my camel!" "Hire my horse!" "I will run up the Pyramid with you!" "Let me guide you!" Hands clutched at me and hungry-looking children yelled,

"Baksheesh! Baksheesh!"

I had only gotten a hundred feet outside the walled complex of the hotel when I turned and retreated inside. Back at the restaurant I still didn't see anyone I knew, but man, did I need another cup of coffee! Had I come this far not to be able to leave the protection of this hotel? Could I face that wild crowd and somehow get to the Pyramid? I was truly rattled by all this, so I sat there and worked it up, and went for another run up that hill!

"No!" I said, "No! No! I don't want to ride your damn camel!" I just kept walking, saying 'no' to everyone and everything--walking fast, not stopping for anything and threatening anyone who approached me. Soon they fell away, but others would take their place and I was constantly accosted as I forced my way up the hill.

"May I walk with you? My name is Assad and I am your servant." I turned to the man and he was smiling from ear to ear. Dressed in the traditional turban and flowing galabea, his black face was radiant in the desert sunlight. "I work for the Government as a guide to the Pyramid area and it would be my pleasure to serve you for free. If you are happy with what I do, perhaps a little baksheesh. Also, the others seeing you with me, will leave you alone," he reasoned.

"Okay, Assad, you got a deal," I answered.

"Would you like to climb the Pyramid," he asked, "or go inside and see the King's Chamber?" I looked at the mass of stone towering some four hundred and fifty feet above us: there was loose rubble on its surface and it appeared very dangerous. "I think I'll settle for the King's Chamber now, and maybe make the climb later. I'm going to be here a

couple of weeks."

"I will arrange that, but first we should take a walk around the whole area. We should pay tribute to the Sphinx, also," my guide instructed. He walked easily over the large stones lying around the base of the Pyramid and we passed along the east side. To our left was a row of tombs where the King's servants, and perhaps family members were buried, I was told.

"This man we are going to visit is the Keeper of the Tombs," he went on, "and, for just a little baksheesh perhaps he will show them to us. Do you have any money? American dollars? Not too much, just a little?"

"I do have some single dollars," I hesitated.

"Just one," he said, "don't give him more than one." An old man appeared from among the rocks, dirty as the ground around him--and, yes, yes he could show me a secret compartment in one of the graves. He heaved a huge stone aside, all the while talking, but not in any language I understood. Finally my guide explained that the cavern had probably been to hold jewels and the personal effects of the deceased.

"Come," said Assad, "the Sphinx is waiting." He continued as we walked down the hill toward the half-man half-lion figure, "the Sphinx is the guardian of the Pyramids, and he has always been. The first pyramid, the greatest one, was built by King Cheops, (Khufu) in the 4th Dynasty, some four thousands of years ago. In turn, his son, Chephren, (Khafre) built the second pyramid, and it is believed, the Sphinx as well. He built this pyramid lesser than his father's out of respect, and his descendant, Mycerinus, (Menkaure) the builder of the third pyramid, did likewise. The Sphinx has been buried many times in the

sands of the desert, always to rise again and maintain the eternal vigil."

I looked at the half-man, half-beast--it was also half-gone! The nose and beard on the human face had been destroyed. Four thousand years of history had passed before this thing, and it was about to witness a Grateful Dead concert!

"The man we are going to visit is the Keeper of the Sphinx," my man, Assad said, "but, don't give him more than one American dollar, and perhaps he will permit us to visit the Chapel. This is not allowed to the public," he assured me. Speaking in Egyptian to the Moslem guard, Assad took the dollar and cleared our way. We passed through locked iron gates and I was led to a very crude rock altar. We stood in silence and felt the solitude of the room.

"Come," my guide said, "we will return to the Pyramids, but first you must see my village." Dirt roads led between mud and stone buildings as we walked the narrow streets leading into the village; small children yelled out to Assad as we passed. Ragged and unkempt, they played in the streets with animals of every kind--goats, chickens and mongrel dogs, all seemed to share the same space. "The people of Mena Village are the guides to the Pyramids," Assad told me, "and, like the Sphinx, they always have been. Some speak as many as five languages with no instruction, and we are taught to hold this position with great pride as it is passed on from generation to generation. My father was a guide also.

"Come, let us visit this shopkeeper," Assad led me into a doorway, "and, he will prepare some tea for us. For no charge, of course," he went on, "just for the opportunity to show you

some herb teas and fine oils from around the world." Multi-colored glass bottles lined the shelves of the small, crowded shop. The shopkeeper was most attentive as he prepared a tea I had selected from an extensive menu. He passed me oils and perfumes to smell and then said he had a very special concoction that could be taken as a tea and which would make a 'he-man' out of me, sexually. It would, "Give you the heart of a camel!"

"I think I better settle for one of the small bottles of oil, Assad," I said, "that other might get me in trouble."

"Don't give him more than three American dollars," Assad instructed me. "We must get on to the Pyramids, King Cheops has waited long enough." The hot, mid-morning sun beat down on us as we walked the dusty road back up the hill. The Egyptians we passed smiled to us and some even bowed in greeting, saying, "Welcome, American, welcome to Egypt!"

The tempo and energy around the Pyramid had increased even more. Hawkers were selling soft drinks, car horns blared their way through the continuous line of tour buses, protesting camels bellowed and carts carried goods of every kind. An old shack served as a ticket booth where permits to enter the King's Chamber were sold. Behind this there was a shady area that served as a gathering place for the guides. "Have some tea with us," said Assad. "Not like the herb tea, but the way we drink it." He seated me amongst the guides on an over-turned bucket and left, saying he would get my ticket to enter the King's Chamber. I really could have been in another world. These men dressed in their turbans and galabeas were like no circle of men I had ever sat with.

"Khat," said one of the guides as he passed me a demitasse of the black liquid. It was very strong and even sweeter. As I first smelled it and then tasted the tea I was the center of attention as they all laughed, wanting to share it with me.

"I have arranged with the Keeper of the Pyramid for you to be included with one of the tours. Don't give him more than one American dollar though, because I have already bought your ticket for you," he said, handing me a piece of paper. "The Moslems are the Keepers and Guardians of the Pyramids," said Assad as we approached the entrance, "and, the man I'm going to introduce you to is a very important man."

The aged and toothless old man wore the black skull cap of his Moslem sect. Small in stature, there was a power about him, and a twinkle in his eye, as he bowed and said, "I am Mohammed, your servant."

I passed him the traditional dollar bill, and he took it without looking at it. "You may be included with this tour now starting the climb to the King's Chamber," adding, "but, you must be very careful of your footing--we will go slowly."

"This entrance was forced by robbers centuries ago," Mohammed began his lecture to the small group from one of the tour buses, "and the original entrance can be seen from the outside, about forty feet above where we now stand." I stepped inside the mammoth stone structure and all sound from the streets below immediately ceased. It was very humid, very warm, and the stones around me were damp. The smell of urine was stifling!

"The passageway is very small," said Mohammed, "and we will descend in the four-

foot tall shaft for sixty-five feet where we encounter a fork, and start to climb. It is 125 feet to the Grand Gallery, and there we will need to rest." Mohammed led us into the tiny shaft. It was very difficult to move and I tried waddling like a duck through the passage. Finally I crawled on my hands and knees. It seemed like forever before we reached the fork. On we crawled, around the turn and up-- my legs were cramped and aching. How far can this be, I wondered. Then a light ahead shone and we stepped out of the tiny passageway into a massive stone room.

Mohammed gathered the group around and went on with the information. "There are three burial chambers in the Pyramid. The passageway before us, should we take it, goes to what is known as the Queen's Chamber.

"Below the Pyramid, deep in the bedrock, there is what is believed to be the original burial place, now called 'The Pit.' If we had gone straight down at the fork in the passageway that is where we would have ended up.

"The early Kings of Egypt were buried in the desert sands for preservation. In time, the practice of placing stones on these graves began, and with that, came the builders of the Pyramids. The Pit was abandoned in favor of a burial place inside the structure, and this second chamber, incorrectly referred to as the Queen's Chamber, was begun. Again, it is believed this work was stopped when it was decided to move to the now existing King's Chamber, and both the others remain unfinished.

"The room we stand in is the Grand Gallery, and it is here that the large stones used to seal the passageway after burial were stored. The

room is an engineering masterpiece, twenty-eight feet tall and one hundred fifty feet long-- it pierces to the heart of the Pyramid and is the mouth of the King's Chamber."

We followed wooden steps along the wall for the rest of the climb to the top, and by the time we got there I was exhausted. I was soaking wet with perspiration and as I entered the royal King's Chamber the smell of urine almost over-powered me. Who would defile such a place?

"The King's Chamber is entirely made of granite and the stones so perfectly fitted that it is impossible to insert even a sheet of paper between them," said our guide. "The room is nineteen feet high and measures 17 by 34 feet. There are two vents leading to the south and north outer walls of the Pyramid and these are often referred to as air vents, but more likely were designed so that the spirit of the deceased could come and go. The Sarcophagus was empty when the Pyramid was penetrated and the Royal Mummy gone," he said while pointing to the open granite box. "The sarcophagus is wider than the doorway so it must have been placed here as the structure was erected. It measures three feet deep, seven and a half feet long and two and three-quarters feet wide.

"The ceiling is made of nine monolithic granite stones each eighteen feet long and weighing four hundred ton. Five weight-discharging chambers are above that to handle the mass above our heads, and the upper-most one has a chevroned roof." As Mohammed spoke, the sound bounced around the room and echoed off the walls. I tried to imagine just how the Grateful Dead would sound in here.

"Mister," Mohammed looked at me, "since

you are not with this tour bus, you may wait for me here until I return with another group, if you would like."

"I would like very much to feel this place alone, Mohammed, if that would be possible," I said and with that, Mohammed turned and led the others out the door and down the steps of the Grand Gallery. I listened as the group passed from my range of senses and promised myself not to panic. It was so quiet--deathly quiet you might say--but there was more than that, there was a feeling of heaviness, of denseness, compactedness and aloneness. Time passed as if I were asleep or dreaming, and there were no disruptions--a little taste of eternity. An endless period of time passed in the dimly lit chamber and finally in the distance I heard the faint echo of steps as Mohammed led another tour up the Grand Gallery.

I somehow missed seeing the Queen's Chamber on our way down; we had passed it before it came to mind. I was not through with this place though--I knew I would be back repeatedly during my stay in Egypt. I gave Mohammed another dollar when we finally stepped out of the tiny passageway, and I thanked him very warmly. Both the noise and the brilliant sunlight rushed me as I left the great rock structure. Suddenly Assad was at my side, "Now we climb the Pyramid," he said. "No, I've had enough for now, Assad. I'm going down the hill to my hotel. How much do I owe you?" I asked.

"Wait," he quickly replied, as we walked down the steps of the Pyramid, "there is a shop in my village."

"No, Assad, another time perhaps, but for now I must go. How much money would be fair to you?"

"It is usually two dollars, but," he added, "I did give you the three-dollar tour." His black face broke into a wide grin as I passed the money to him, and he said, "See the Sound and Light Show at the Sphinx tonight and you will gain much knowledge of the Pyramids and of Egypt." He bowed deeply before me and said, "Go with Allah."

As soon as Assad left me I was again besieged by the ride-hirers and hawkers selling everything imaginable. I pushed my way on down the hill. A stream of people followed as I made for the gates of the tropical, lush garden complex. When they saw where I was going, all turned away.

Leaving the barren desert sand behind, it was like stepping through a veil and changing worlds. My room was another surprise, and just about as shocking. Courtenay was a wizard at tie-dye, as I learned, and had hung them all over our room: fabric draped the beds and hung from the walls, they were truly striking! Some were pyramid-shaped and there was every kind of design, if you could see it. "I hope you don't mind," he started to apologize.

Courtenay had been everywhere I'd been, as it turned out and had even met Mohammed. He was into jogging, and had run the entire area, all three Pyramids, the Sphinx and the Village. "You're lucky though," he commented, "I didn't get to be alone in the King's Chamber. It must have been some experience!"

He hadn't been bothered by the hawkers, he said, because they couldn't keep up with him. "Except around the gates of the hotel," he said, "I just outran them!"

The air-conditioned room was another relief from the mid-noon desert heat and I fell asleep

on the top of my bed. Jet lag was still with me, and added to the fact that I had begun this visit with a bang--it was a lot of exposure.

I awoke to a knock on the door and got up to let Bear and Isabelle in. They both loved the tie-dyes and I mentioned Courtenay, who had apparently gone out again. "He's an old friend," Bear told me, "and many of the Grateful Dead's speaker covers are his work."

Bear hadn't been anywhere yet, he said, and suggested we have dinner in one of the hotel restaurants. Then we could take a walk past the Pyramids. Maybe tomorrow he would go inside. I could feel his anticipation--he had waited a long time for this experience and he would savor the moment.

In the restaurant Bear sent his meat back to the chef three times, saying, "Burned! Burned!" He finally ate the third one while commenting that if he had enough time in Egypt perhaps he would be able to improve the quality of the preparation of their food!

Past the iron gates and out on the streets of the desert I found the tempo completely changed. There were a few offers for camel rides into the desert, as we walked up the hill toward the Pyramid, but all in all, the hawkers were gone--and so were the busloads of tourists. The people of Mena Village had come to life and they were all around the base of the Pyramid in large groups, they sang and danced, and played on instruments that were unknown to me--the music unfamiliar. They were having a party, a real celebration. Small children ran about, camels moaned and bellowed in the setting sun. We strolled through the crowds of people who smiled as they shouted greetings to us. A goat herd was passing along the base of the Pyramid and it

was obvious that the shepherds had become caught up in the dance somewhere, because the goats started climbing up the Pyramid! Up they went, one level at a time, loving the craggy heights. Amused by this, we kept walking and headed for the second Pyramid, that of King Chephren.

All the villagers were clustered around the north and east sides of Cheops and we only passed an occasional stroller as we walked farther into the desert. The evening was just beautiful and the early stars were glistening like jewels as day turned to night. Once passed Chephren, I chose to wait on a big rock while Bear and Isabelle walked on to the third Pyramid, that of King Mycerinus. I lay down on the warm rock and stared up to the heavens. In the middle of this tranquil mood, all of a sudden the whole Pyramid before me burst into color and a booming voice blasted across the desert, "So, you have come...Marhaba, you are welcome! I said you would come and here I am expecting you. You will always find me waiting, with a smile of affection in anticipation of your visit. 'You ask who I am?"

"I am the Sphinx, Lord of the Desert and Guardian of the Kingdom of Immortals." I was almost in shock but soon realized I was experiencing the "Sound and Light Show." The voice pierced the desert as color danced over the Pyramids: reds, blues, greens and every spectrum of a rainbow.

"They told me my guest had arrived, so I waited for you. Greetings! I see a question in your eyes..., see what I have prepared for you. You surely must know. But come, let us talk, for the talk of friends is a delight of the heart. And, in your honor, I will recount all my secrets.

"Forty-five long centuries of time I have been here, witness to every sunrise man has awakened to. From the first dawn of Egypt's history I have shared its peoples' love of life, the life they live and the life they are preparing for--since the concept of Eternity, then as now, dominates our beliefs. Never did we consider death the end of life, it has always been the gateway to another life, a brighter and more everlasting one.

"Come, let us make a tour of the Kingdom of Immortals...

"This is the lord of all pyramids, with his towering height and massive bulk--the tomb of Cheops, the most renowned monarch of the 4th Dynasty and one of the greatest kings of all time. He lived over 4,500 years ago and himself witnessed 100,000 of Egypt's young manhood flock to this valley--their hearts filled with the light of faith--to build his Pyramid, boulder upon boulder, and to extract, from the heart of the valley some 2,500,000 blocks of limestone.

"Through the genius of algebra and geometry, astrology and science, these youths fashioned this, their myth (which does not appear to be the product of man) so that the embalmed body of the great Pharaoh could be placed within its vast interior. The mummy, whose entrails had all been removed, with the exception of the heart--source of dreams and aid to immortality, was placed there, so that it remains in the depths, among the secrets of the grave, to keep the soul company in its solitude, for the soul cannot alone confront the coming darkness. Near the mummy they put food enough to last the journey to Eternity; and nearby they carved in the rock the frame-works in which were placed Cheops' boats--

made of wood--in which the dead king was to cross over to Eternity.

"As for this other one--it is the Pyramid of Chefren, son of the great Cheops. He also was a great king. But even in his greatness he took into consideration his father's standing, for he made his pyramid lesser than his father's in length, width and height. These slabs, sliced at the summit, are the remains of the smooth casing which used to cover every side of the Pyramid. Within lay the great Pharaoh, whose features had been chiselled on a green diorite statue, almost pulsating with life; just as though the artist had, only yesterday, dusted his two hands after completing his task.

"Then came Menkau'ra (Mycerinus), and he erected the third Pyramid and created the name "Menkau'ra of the Spirit of the God." From his father, he inherited the same kind of modesty and his pyramid in turn is lesser than the other two. But the secret of his Pyramid's beauty is that it lent his father's additional splendour and majesty and created the three Pyramids--a wonder of wonders.

"The 4th Dynasty completed its mission and history closed its chapters. There remained its Pyramids--imperishable through the ages--and thus have Cheops, Chefren and Menkau'ra survived--they are still here...and their kingdom remains on this eternal knoll, and still their "royal seats" rank high, the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt upon their heads. They maintain their watch of this side of the desert where lie beloved queens, ministers, priests, engineers and doctors. All lie here below these mastabas; each in his place according to his status in the living world--that these Pyramids and their surroundings may appear, in the Other World as a royal palace encompassed

by palaces of princes and nobles. It is a city amongst the cities of the other world, reposing behind an enclosure of temples, within the walls of which are repeated the prayers of the people and the chants of the priests.

"Did I not tell you, friend, that this, our tour, was a journey--a journey over the milestones of time--a journey covering around forty-five centuries of time's age, and which is as yet not ended?

"In this labyrinth of the City of Death can be found one particular grave amongst the thousands of graves. This is the tomb of Hotep-Horus--Cheops' mother. Within it, once, was her sarcophagus, made of one whole block of marble.

"What a wonder this desert is...It reverberates with glories...and neither windstorms nor sandstorms can quiet its resolute voices.

"You ask: Whose concept was the pyramids in the first place? Homage is paid to Imhotep, whose genius fashioned the first pyramid in existence...What architecture, what simplicity, what majesty was the outcome! The mastery of line and beauty of angles, he designed the first of the wonders---the Pyramid of Sakkara--which emerged palatial and towering in steps.

"Friend Sphinx! They say that there is a story of yourself and the sands...

"Has it reached you too? Strange the behaviour of this age's progeny--one cannot keep a secret from them. I promised you I would not conceal any secrets from you. And here and now I will keep my promise...

"Those were the days during which time forgot my majestic status, so that the sands heaped up around me till they almost choked me. Then the great Amenhotep came to the throne.

"He sallied forth as an invader to the lands between the two rivers. One of his princes passed by me and sat in my company to rest from the strain of a lion-hunting expedition. So he drowsed, and I appeared to him in a dream and whispered:

" 'My son...look upon me...I, the lord of this domain...The sands have covered me...sweep the sands away from me. I will make Egypt yours and I will place in your hands a double crown...the crown of Lower and Upper Egypt.' The prince awoke from his sleep and swept the sands away from me. I kept my promise, and the boy prince became...King Thotmes IV, who engraved at my feet the story of how I came to him in his dream. After that the revellers returned to keep me company and the joyous processions circled around me. I watched his coronation festival just as later I witnessed his funeral procession.

"That day, all grieved over him, and I heard the voice of the high priest mourn him: 'O King, you do not depart from us dead, but go forth alive. Soon you shall awaken, if you have slumbered, and you will be reincarnated, if you have died. You have risen to the sky and have become a star whose light cannot be eclipsed.'"

"Sphinx...your magnificent tales draw me towards horizons of great meaning and romance."

"You have reminded me of romantic nature. He was the most romantic and most pious Pharaoh; the Pharaoh who succeeded Amenhotep III. His eyes were like two lakes of meditation and his face gentle and serene. He abandoned Thebes and foresook Amun and his priests; calling for the one god in whom he believed. He called the god in the sky by the

name of "Aton." He renounced his own name of Amenhotep IV and adopted for himself a new name--"Akhnaton" or "Servant of Aton," the one God, of whom there is no God but He.

"The land was liberated of unjust traditions. The walls of the royal palace were as though fissured by the emergence from them of a face of exceptional loveliness and dazzling beauty--a face beloved by people in every age and place--Nefertiti, who by her beauty and magic inspired artists and sculptors.

"She grew up with Akhnaton and stood by him in his struggle until the day he died; a young man of just over thirty.

"Then came Tutankhamun to rule nine years only, and he also died before reaching the age of maturity; his life ending with a nosegay of flowers, plucked from Egypt's fields by his sad and beloved wife."

"Sphinx, what else have you witnessed of time's events?"

"I have witnessed processions of conquerors. They passed by here...and between my hands they stood reverent, with bowed heads. I have seen Alexander the Great in his majesty and greatness. He lies now in an unknown spot in Egypt's land. I have seen Caesar in his lightning glory, fearing the glare of Egypt's sun. And Cleopatra--I have seen her in her most beautiful apparel, toying with the hearts of Caesars. I have seen Bonaparte authoritative and arrogant. He came--and left with those departing. Many generations have passed--and conquerors have succeeded each other. And they were swept away as the sands around me were swept away.

"I have passed through some grim moments--one day a conceited stiff-neck examined my

face. He rejected my smile, found it mocking and doubtful, so he punched his fist into my face and mutilated my nose--events--events--all of them come and gone and I remain to receive you today."

"Sphinx, what of Sakkara?"

"This, my friend, is another terrain, not more than 25 kilometers from here. At present it rings with the sounds of stupendous excavations started by the English archaeologist, Emery. He was in search of the tomb of Imhotep, God of Healing and Wisdom--the artist architect--the scientist with the secrets of embalment. He was so loved by the Egyptians that they raised him to the ranks of the gods. Emery believed that, in discovering the Sirdab or long tunnel and the mounds of mummies of the sacred bird, the ibis, he was on the right track to Imhotep's tomb, and that the discovery of it will change all that is known of the history of the Old Kingdom in Egypt.

"I forgot to tell you that Sakkara is one of the most important regions of Ancient Egyptian antiquities, for it is near the site of Egypt's old capital, Memphis. There is the Step Pyramid of Zoser and his funerary temple; and the pyramid of Unas, on which are registered the "Pyramid Texts" which are considered the first religious records in history. Then there are the tombs of the nobles and the subterranean "Serapeum"--what more can you see at Sakkara?"

"Friend Sphinx...before I thank you for your hospitality, I have one last question..."

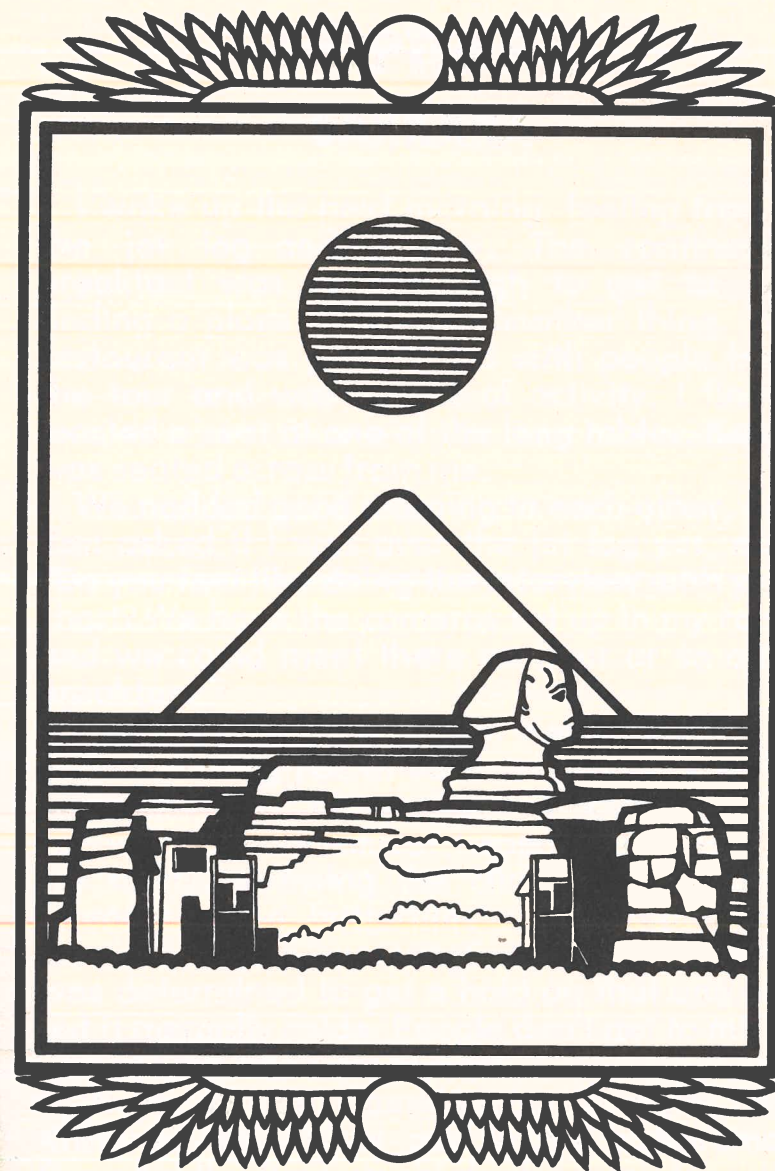
"I know it! Our tour has lasted the whole day and you wish to ask: What of the evening? Let me tell you something...My descendants are experts in the art of living, so do not worry about how to pass your evening. This long road

which extends before you and is called 'The Pyramids Road' has the answer to your question. You will be able to find the places--creating the nightlife--scattered in this my domain and forming, with their twinkling lights in the dark of late nights, a chain of sparkling diamonds.

"Friend, let me apologize if you have imagined that talk of myself has taken up all our dialogue. For I am not by nature egotistical...but I am the sole remaining witness to all the incidents and so, it was essential that the whole story issue from my lips...this story, the exciting and magnificent details of which I invite you to live through one evening with the 'Sound and Light' performance.

"Friend, I tell you: my message to you and my hospitality towards you come from the depth of history. The echo of my voice has been repeated in your hearing through the Greek and Roman civilizations, Christ's Message and Mohammed's Laws...Tomorrow, the first rays of the sun's light will return to greet my face once more...and thousands of suns will rise and set over me. Of the earth's civilizations, ours will remain...as the purest, the oldest and freshest of them all! My friend...au revoir!"

Bear and Isabelle caught up with me again at the rock and the three of us listened to the last of the Sound and Light Show as we made our way back across the desert toward our hotel.





CHAPTER SIX

SAKKARA

I woke up the next morning, feeling free of the jet lag--and hungry. The continental breakfast was easy enough to get to, but finding a place to sit was another thing. The restaurant was jam-packed with people from the tour and was a buzz of activity. I finally located a seat at one of the long tables, Kesey was seated across from me.

We nodded good morning to each other, and Ken asked if I was over the jet lag yet, and, "Do you feel like doing the interview with your chart? We have the cameras set up in my room and we could meet there an hour or so after breakfast."

I automatically liked Ken Kesey. He has a way of putting you at ease and giving you the options. "Yes, of course, I'd love that," I replied. After breakfast I spent some time in my room reviewing the chart. There was a moment when butterflies started up in my stomach--a nervous reaction, I thought, and was determined to get a hold on that one and put it mentally aside. People don't get to me so why should that little camera.

The mood was relaxed in Kesey's room, Paul Krassner introduced me to the cameraman Gary Biddle--Paul would do the interview and Ken would direct the camera. Paul and I sat at a table on the patio, and with the Pyramids in the background, we began the interview. After a short introduction, Paul turned it over to me

and I started a talk on the chart that was more astronomical than esoteric. I described the Eclipse as the lining-up of the Sun, Moon and Earth, adding the fact that it would all occur during the Grateful Dead's last gig at the Sphinx Theatre. At the end I wasn't happy with it as I was camera-shy and it caused me to hesitate with my speech--to even stammer a couple of times.

"Let's move the camera over this way," said Kesey, "and try that again. Parts of that were real good," he reassured me. This time when he rolled the camera I was more at ease, and managed to add a few factors to the first take, but toward the end I blew it again, hesitating in my speech and pausing too long. It was better, but it still didn't make it.

"Let's try that one more time," said Kesey. "You have some good stuff in there. Here, we'll move the camera again, you just keep it up." On the third take I felt the words flow from my mouth, as smooth as honey. I expanded the talk even more, and at the end, I knew that I had really come across. That one I was proud of, I thought, they can do whatever they want with that take.

Before I left Kesey's room he invited me on a tour to Sakkara that he was organizing for the following day, saying the area was important in Egyptian history.

I found Bear, Isabelle, Nikki Scully and Courtenay sitting among the tie-dyes in our room; Courtenay had arranged a special tour of Cheops' Pyramid for us. He had made friends with one of the Moslem guides who was willing to take us into all three chambers, including the Pit, supposedly not open to the public.

We met our guide, Hassan, at the entrance

to Cheop's Pyramid where he stood talking to the old man, Mohammed. Mohammed looked our little group over with apparent approval: I saw him pass Hassan a very large key. Hassan was a gentle soul, it seemed, and taller than most Egyptians; he beamed out a very happy energy. He stooped low to enter the tiny passageway and said, simply, "Follow me."

We duck-walked and crawled until we reached the fork leading to the Queen's and King's Chamber, but it was there that Hassan took the great key from beneath his galabea and inserted it into an ancient padlock and threw back the iron door leading into an even smaller shaft. It was 375 feet from the entrance of the Pyramid to the Pit--more than the length of a football field! As if descending a ladder our small group slowly made its way down, one step at a time. Hassan yelled assurances to us, and in a happy, if a bit fearful mood, we continued the descent.

Finally the chamber was reached, the only light was an oil lantern held by Hassan. There were two rooms, both apparently abandoned before completion, and a great hole in the floor of the second room. A shaft led from this room also, but dead-ended some thirty feet into the bedrock. Both rooms were hewn out of the stone ninety feet below the Great Pyramid, exactly on its axis!

Bear, like the rest of us, was ecstatic. He ran through all the chambers, peering down the seemingly bottomless hole, and crawled into the shaft--we all did! At last, Hassan said that if we would be seated around the rooms he would turn the lantern off so that we could experience the Pit in total darkness!

We sat in the black silence for an indefinite time, then someone started to chant 'OM.'

Soon we all joined in and we dragged the OM out into a continuous sound that bounced around the rock chambers and echoed off the walls. I felt I was drifting, floating, passing through the heavens and riding on the wave of a chant.

"OOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMMMmmmmm-mm...

On our way out of the Pit I had to agree with Isabelle that this was, indeed, probably not open to the public. The ascent was tortuous on our legs, and at the iron door we took the fork toward the Grand Gallery. The shaft to the Pit had been dark, but here there were dimly-lit electric bulbs along this slightly larger tunnel. After a rest at the Grand Gallery, we continued along a horizontal corridor to the Queen's Chamber. This room was made of limestone blocks, and, like the Pit, was incomplete. Being somewhat anxious to see the King's Chamber, we didn't stay long and returned to the Grand Gallery for our climb to the uppermost Chamber.

At the top of the Grand Gallery on the level leading into the King's Chamber, the three giant granite portcullises were stored that now block the passageway at the bottom. The Grand Gallery was a ramp and after burial of the King, the huge stones were heaved down from the top, and the passageway, an inch narrower at the bottom, was in theory blocked forever. You can still see the stones in place from the passageway carved alongside in the softer limestone by robbers. The stones had to be placed as the Pyramid was erected, and once used, the workers released them and were seemingly trapped. However an escape route was devised at the bottom of the Grand Gallery leading down a narrow shaft into the

entrance of the Pyramid. All exits were later disguised by the finishing stonemasons and the King became an Immortal Stoneburst! A Sunburst in stone!

Mohammed led a tour of people out of the King's Chamber just as we reached the top level of the Grand Gallery, and he said we would have the Chamber to ourselves for at least an hour.

The Chamber and the landing are entirely made of red granite that was chiseled from the distant quarries at Aswan, and floated up the Nile. No small feat!

Courtenay thought it a good idea to lie down inside the sarcophagus, but I settled for standing in it. We Om-ed again, but even with the dim electric lights, it was not quite like the Pit where we had total darkness.

Tired and hungry, we left the Great Pyramid after our visit with the King, but not without a feeling of awe. Unsurpassed in geometrical construction, it remains a marvel to the centuries of tourists who come to pay homage.

The restaurant was buzzing with activity again the next morning, and I was walking around the dining room, tray in hand, looking for a seat, when Ken Kesey caught my eye. He said there would be a bus parked right in front of the restaurant for our ride to Sakkara.

Mohammed, the old Moslem guide of the Pyramids, was by the door of the bus and would conduct our tour. "Our first stop will be Memphis," said Mohammed, "but you will find our ride along the Nile and through Cairo, very interesting."

That was true. Cairo offered the oddest assortment of early morning traffic that one could imagine. Donkey carts, buses, camels and cars, all weaved through the streets, and

everyone who had a horn was honking it!

There was a horse-drawn wagon full of camels, all kneeling, with their long necks sticking up and their heads bobbing to the motion of the bumpy streets. On their way to market, I was told.

Another flatbed wagon carried a load of kneeling women, all dressed in black and covered from head to foot. I thought they were nuns, but no, it is simply a group of ladies traveling together--all Moslem women wear black outside their home.

Rickety bicycles pulled cartloads of sticks: a taxi was in the middle of the street, hood up, another on its side, just left there. The traffic lights at almost every intersection were totally ignored by all drivers. You passed at your own risk through these streets, and accidents seemed common.

Mohammed called our attention to places as we passed; Cairo University, the Zoo and, he said, the Cairo Museum which should be visited on a separate tour. There was so much to see at the Museum that one should spend at least a whole day there.

Outside Cairo we passed a deserted city with dirt streets and mud and stone houses neatly built shoulder to shoulder--no people. The City of the Dead. "The ancient act of placing stones over the burial site is still practiced," said Mohammed, "one at the head, and one at the foot. After burial, the houses are built for the family of the deceased to come and offer prayers." After the pandemonium we had just witnessed in Cairo, the quiet City of the Dead was surreal, with only a few decrepit souls seen here and there crawling about the tombs.

We rode through the lush valley of the Nile

passing sugar factories and palm date groves and it was easy to understand how this land could have fed the multitudes of the ancient civilizations. All vegetation was dark green and grew from rich, dark soil.

The thirty mile ride to Memphis went quickly and the twenty-five or thirty people in our small group filed out of the bus to pay respect to the great massive statue of Ramses II, and the Alabaster Sphinx. "Memphis," Mohammed told us, "was once the thriving capitol of Egypt, and it is from here that the Pharaohs and Kings ruled both Upper and Lower Egypt. Always an important city in Egyptian history, it now lies in total ruins as centuries of time have passed.

"We first come to the Alabaster Sphinx," said our guide as we gathered around the monstrous statue, "and, it is cut from a single stone! The Sphinx stands 14 feet high, is 26 feet long and weighs 80 ton.

"The Sphinx once stood guard at the Temple of Ptah, where Apis, the Sacred Bull, was embalmed before burial at Sakkara in the Serapeum. We will see the Temple before leaving," said Mohammed, "and the Serapeum, but for now, let's move on to the Colossal, the great statue of Ramses II."

The statue lay on its back and the legs were gone, as was his crown. "This statue stood at the entrance to the Temple of Ptah between the Avenue of Sphinxes, and once stood 42 feet high, but now measures 34 feet," said Mohammed.

Gary had his camera gear along to record the tour, and as I passed him in the Temple of Ptah he was obviously struggling under its weight. "Batteries," he explained the heavy backpack--his knees buckled as he tried to balance the camera on his shoulder. The sand

was reflecting the already hot mid-morning sun, and a strong wind was blowing across the desert as we boarded the bus to North Sakkara.

"Sakkara is a vast necropolis area covering four and a half miles, and spanning a time of centuries," Mohammed informed us. "All periods of Egyptian history are found here, from the most ancient to the Greeks and Romans. Here, the Step Pyramid was developed by King Zoser in the Third Dynasty and the Pyramidal Age began.

"The Step Pyramid was the first monument built entirely of quarried stones. These were much smaller in size than the massive rocks used to construct Cheops, but then much development had occurred between the building of the first, and the apex of the Pyramid Age.

"In pre-dynastic times, about 3100 B.C., the Kings were buried in mounds in the desert and covered with sand and gravel. Mastabas and stone benches followed this practice, and the architect of the Step Pyramid, King Zoser's vizier and sage, Imhotep, heaped stone upon stone until he created the structure.

"The Pyramid Texts, first discovered in the Pyramid of Unas, say these were 'steps to the Imperishable Stars,' meaning the northern circumpolar stars, which neither rise nor set on the horizon, but are always there.

"During this time span when Memphis ruled all of Egypt and the Temple of Ptah was its religion, Apis the bull, was worshipped: we were in the Taurean Age. Fixed earth equals stone, and these stone age people carved monuments from the earth to last for all time.

"With the Precession of the Equinoxes came the Arian Age, and a change in philosophy: the

Sun cult developed and it was believed that the King no longer rose to the Imperishable Stars, but rose with the Sun! Within the true pyramid there remains the magical steps, but the entrances were changed to face the east, and the steps filled in to imitate a sunburst.

"Cheops was never surpassed, and as time changes all things, burial practices varied through the ages. Kings and Queens from the remaining dynasties were mostly buried at the Valley of the Kings, near the ancient City of Thebes.

"The art of sculpture began in Egypt, it is believed, because they needed an image representing the deceased to place inside the burial chamber. They were not adept at mummification yet and didn't trust current methods of preservation. At Thebes this art, like the Great Pyramids, reached a peak unsurpassed in all time.

"The Taurean Age gave way to Aries, the Ram, and the Sphinxes guarding the Valley of the Kings bore the head of a Ram. Ramses II came to be, and he built his monuments 'like the stars of heaven.' At Abu Simbel's rock bluff four statues, 76 feet high and weighing 1200 ton each, depict the seated Lord!

"So powerful was the sight of the mountains across the Nile from the ancient city of Thebes, that advancing armies centuries later would halt at their sight, applaud and present arms!" said Mohammed.

The Step Pyramid before us was a rubble of ruins, its surface so eroded by the march of time. The wind was blowing sand at us as we walked past the old pyramid and I noticed some of the Pranksters helping Gary with the camera gear.

At the Pyramid of Unas, where the walls are

inscribed with the Pyramid Texts, we entered the antechamber to see the blue hieroglyphics. Here were written the instructions for dealing with the afterlife and magical incantations to protect and insure the deceased would rejoin and rise with the Sun!

The beautiful blue hieroglyphics were badly worn as far up the walls of the chamber as the steady flow of tourists could reach. The ceiling, however, indicated how the room once appeared.

At the Serapeum, where the sacred bull, Apis, was buried after mummification, we entered a large underground tunnel that measures 372 yards in length, and was 26 feet high. In niches off to the left and right rooms were carved to hold the giant Sarcophaguses. There were 24 of the great stones and they measure 13 feet long, 7 feet wide and 11 feet high. Most were black or pink marble, but a few were limestone.

Great ceremonies followed the death of Apis and a successor was quickly chosen from among the herds by the high priests of the god, Ptah. Marked in a certain way, the bull chosen was then Apis, reborn. The underground chamber was very chilly and a direct contrast to the blazing desert sun as we boarded our bus for the ride back to Cairo.

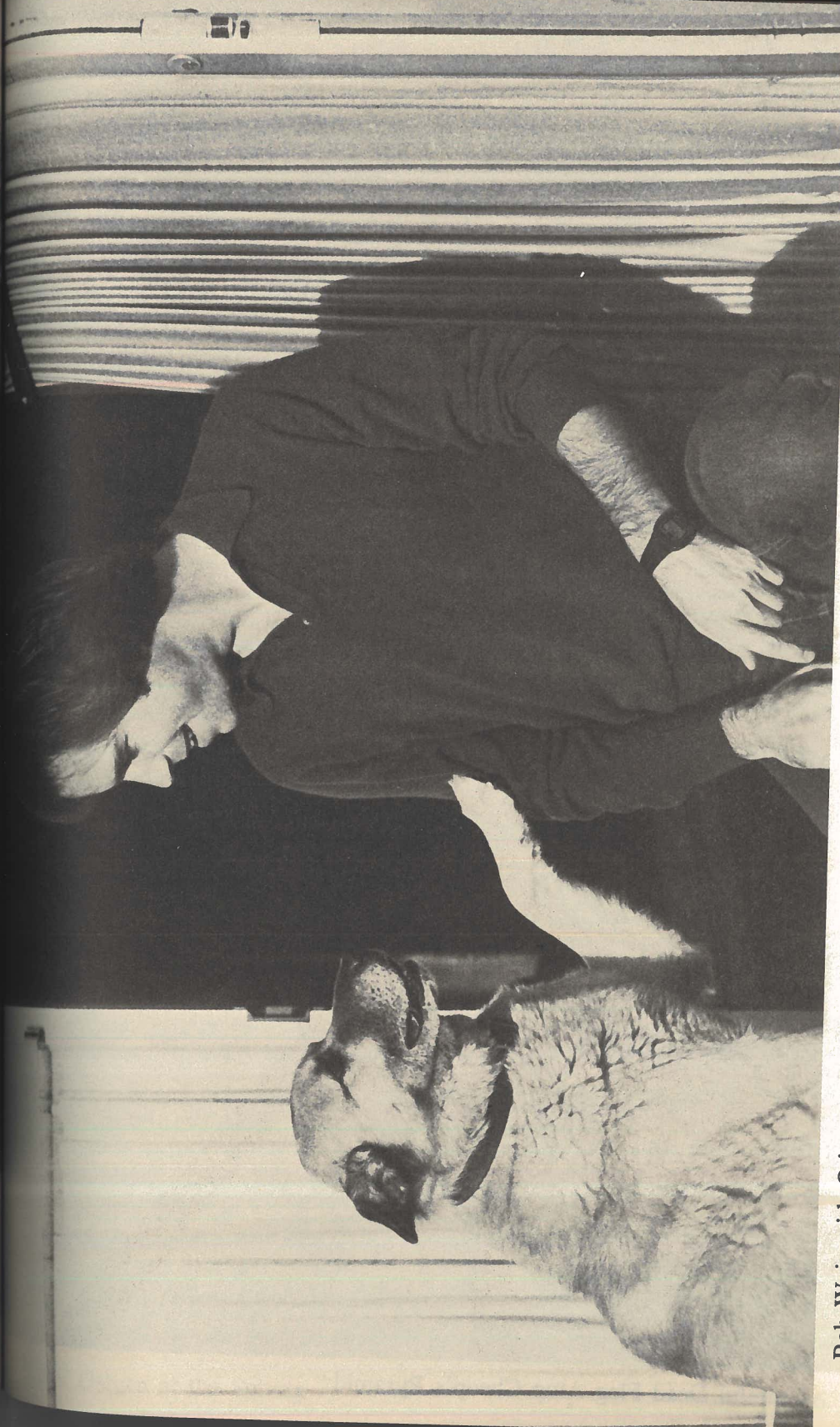
The City was still bustling, but this time we didn't get through as easily--our driver managed to collide with one of the bicycle contraptions. He then leaped out to threaten the man, saying he had jumped in front of us! Fists clenched: they argued loudly with a small crowd gathering. Suddenly, the driver climbed back on the bus, slammed the door and drove away!





GRATEFUL DEAD

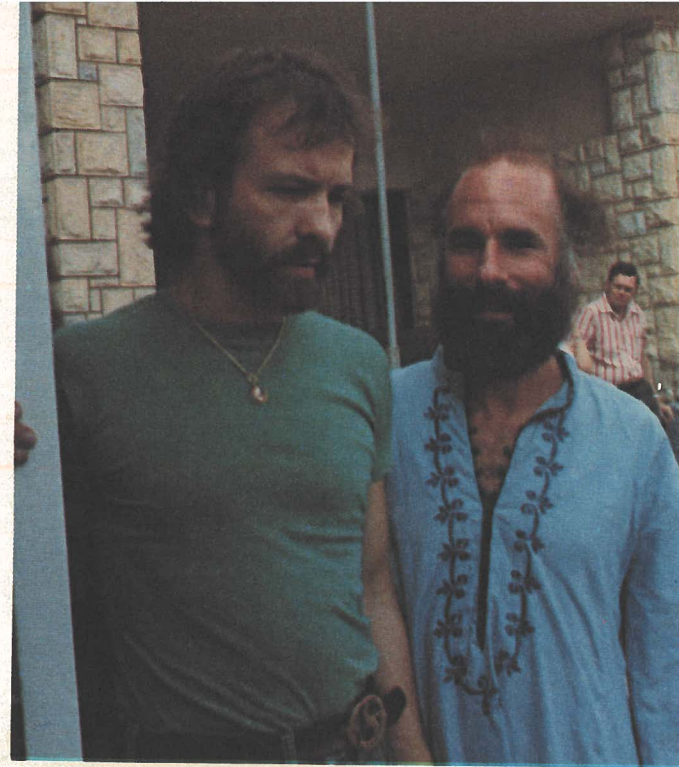
Grateful Dead 1978



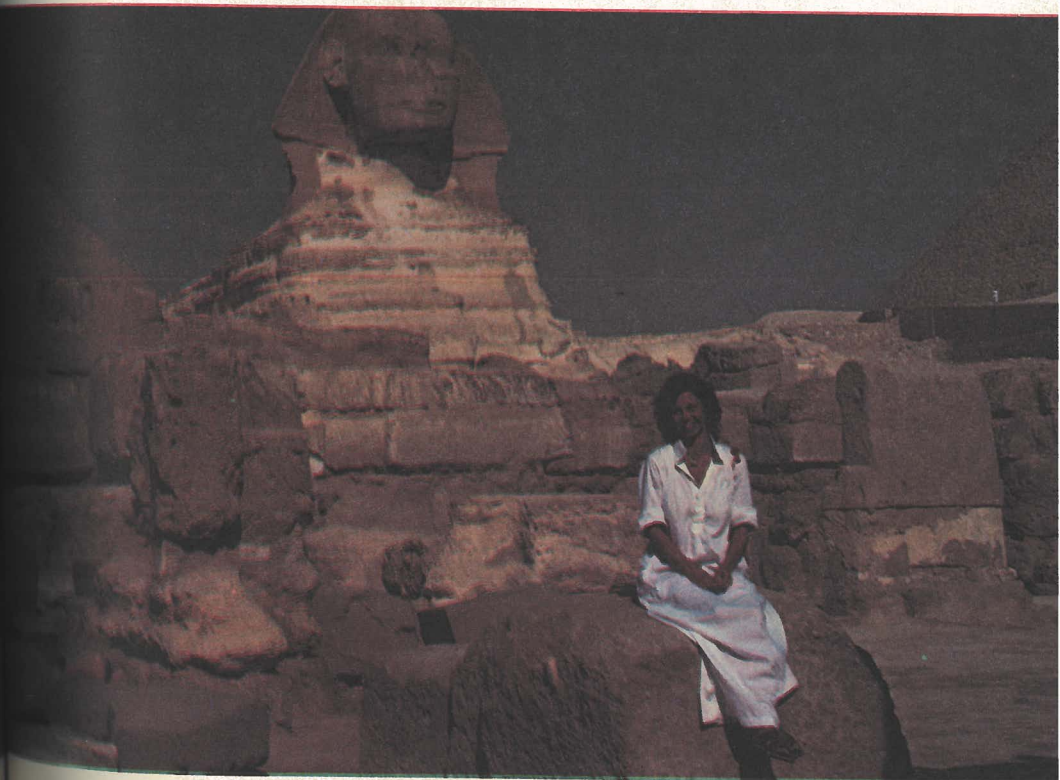
Bob Weir with Otis



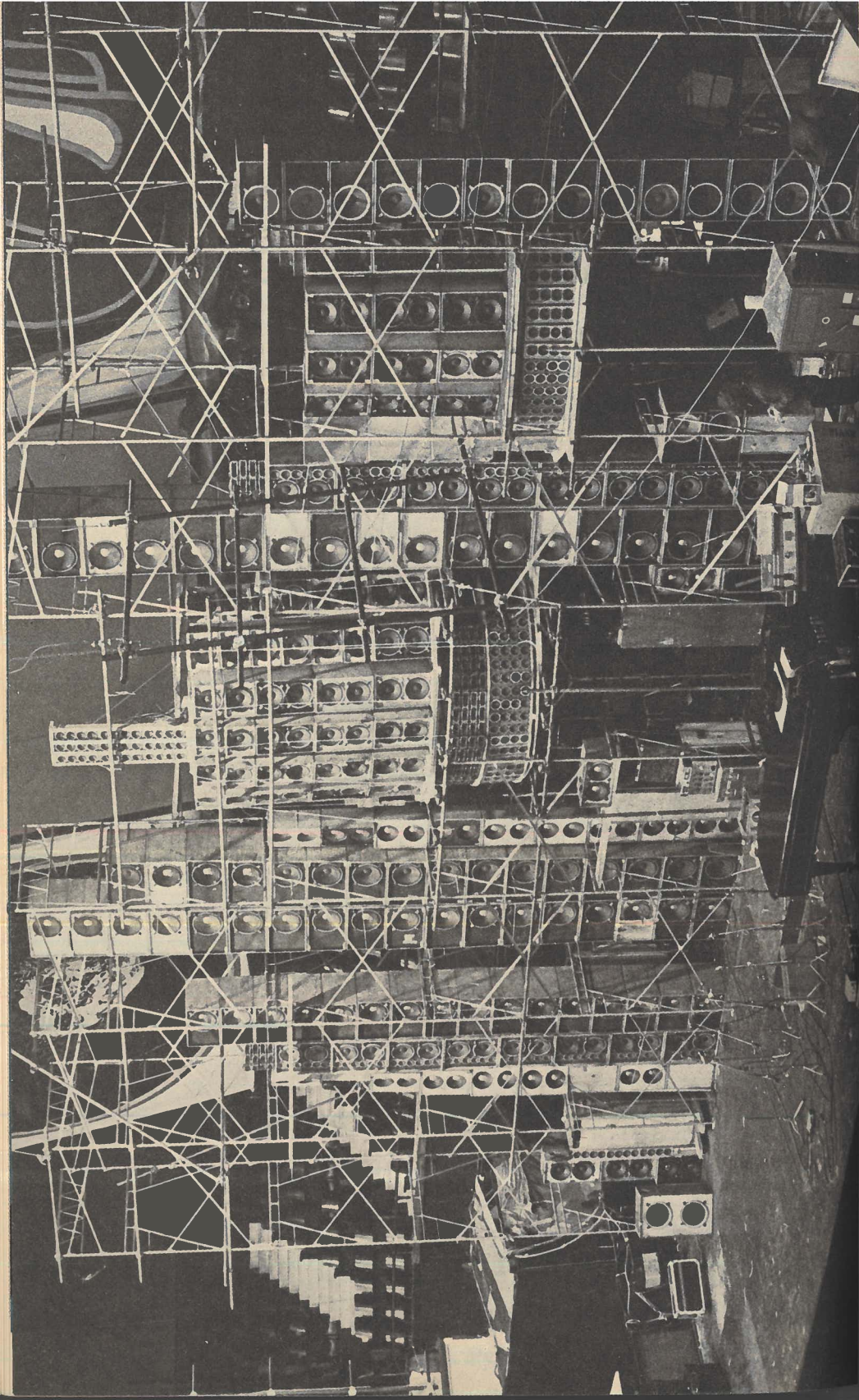
Grateful Dead Flag Atop Cheop's Pyramid



Bear with Bernie Bildman



Kathi Osteen at the Sphinx

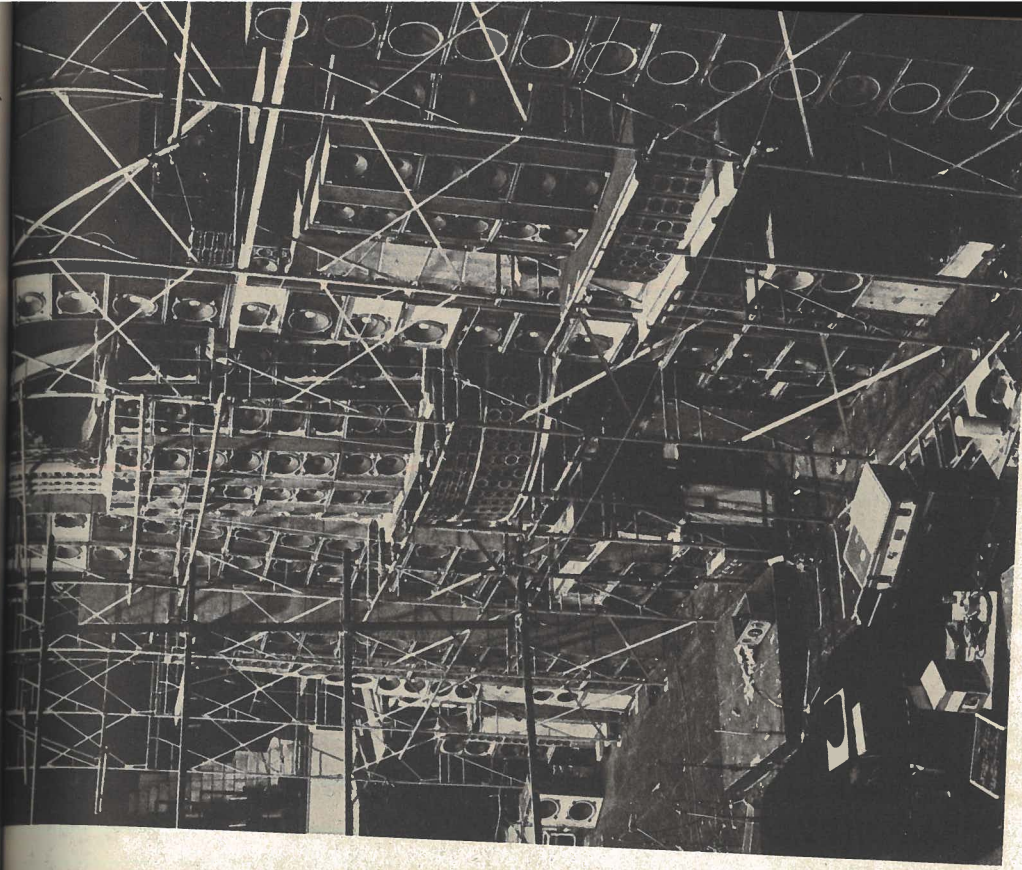


7



Peter Sheridan and John Belushi

8



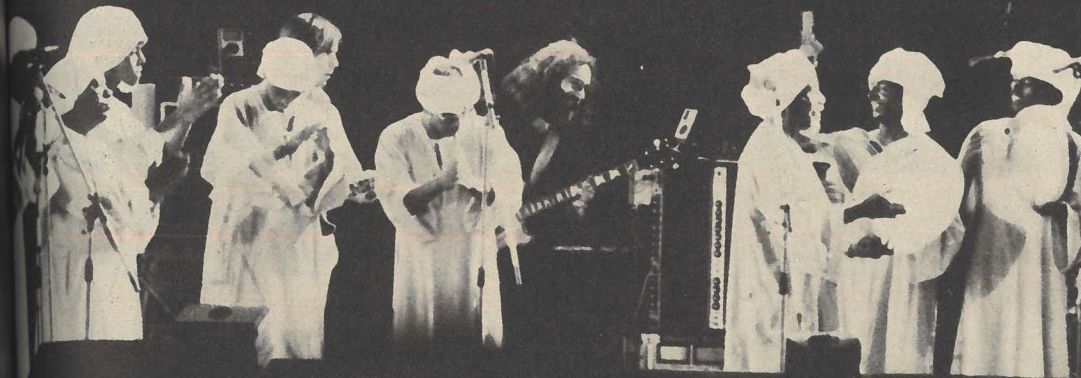
Grateful Dead's Massive Sound System

9





Keith and Donna Godchaux



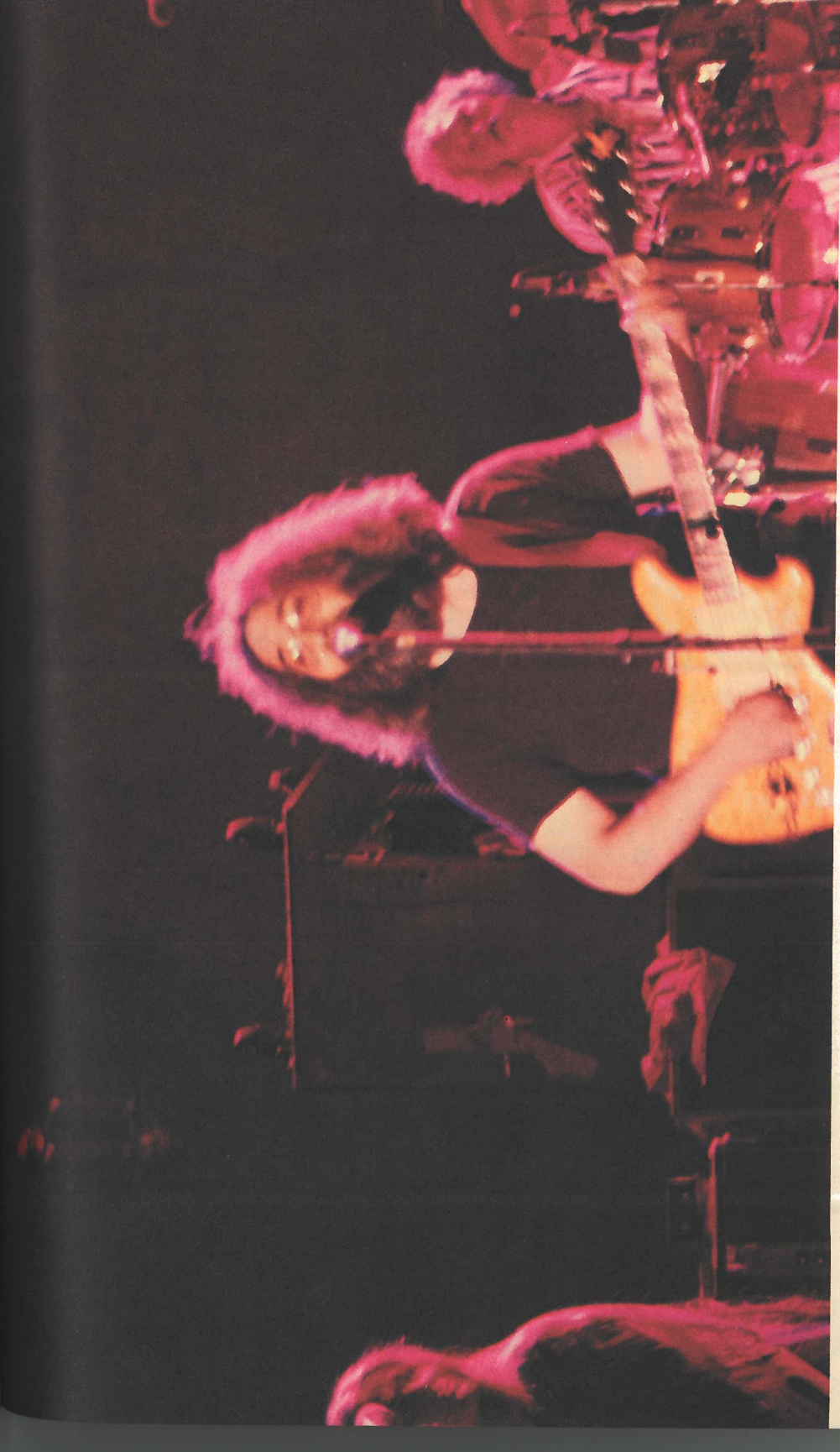
Jerry Garcia, Hamsa El-Din and Cairo Youth Choir



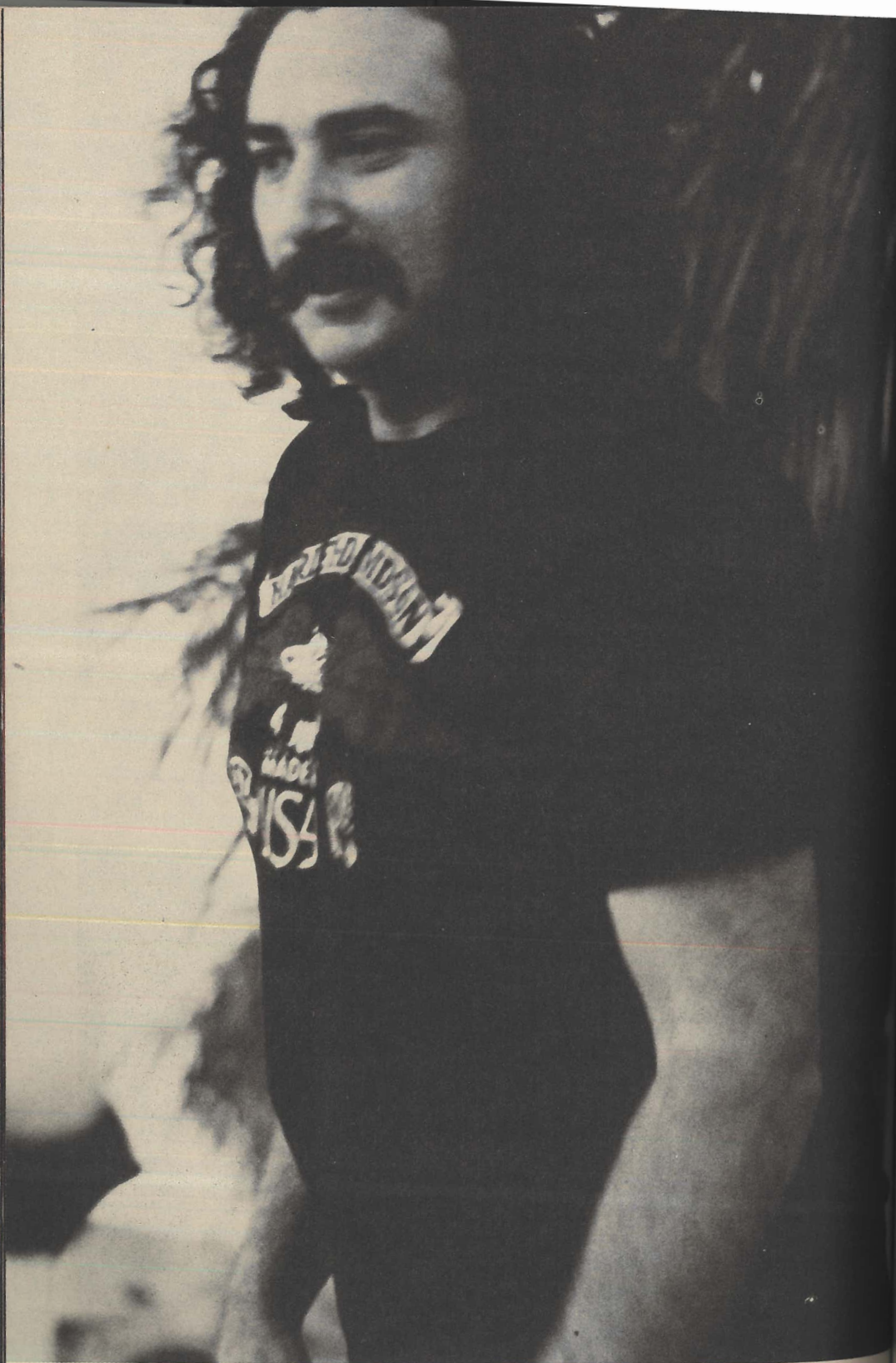
Hamsa El-Din



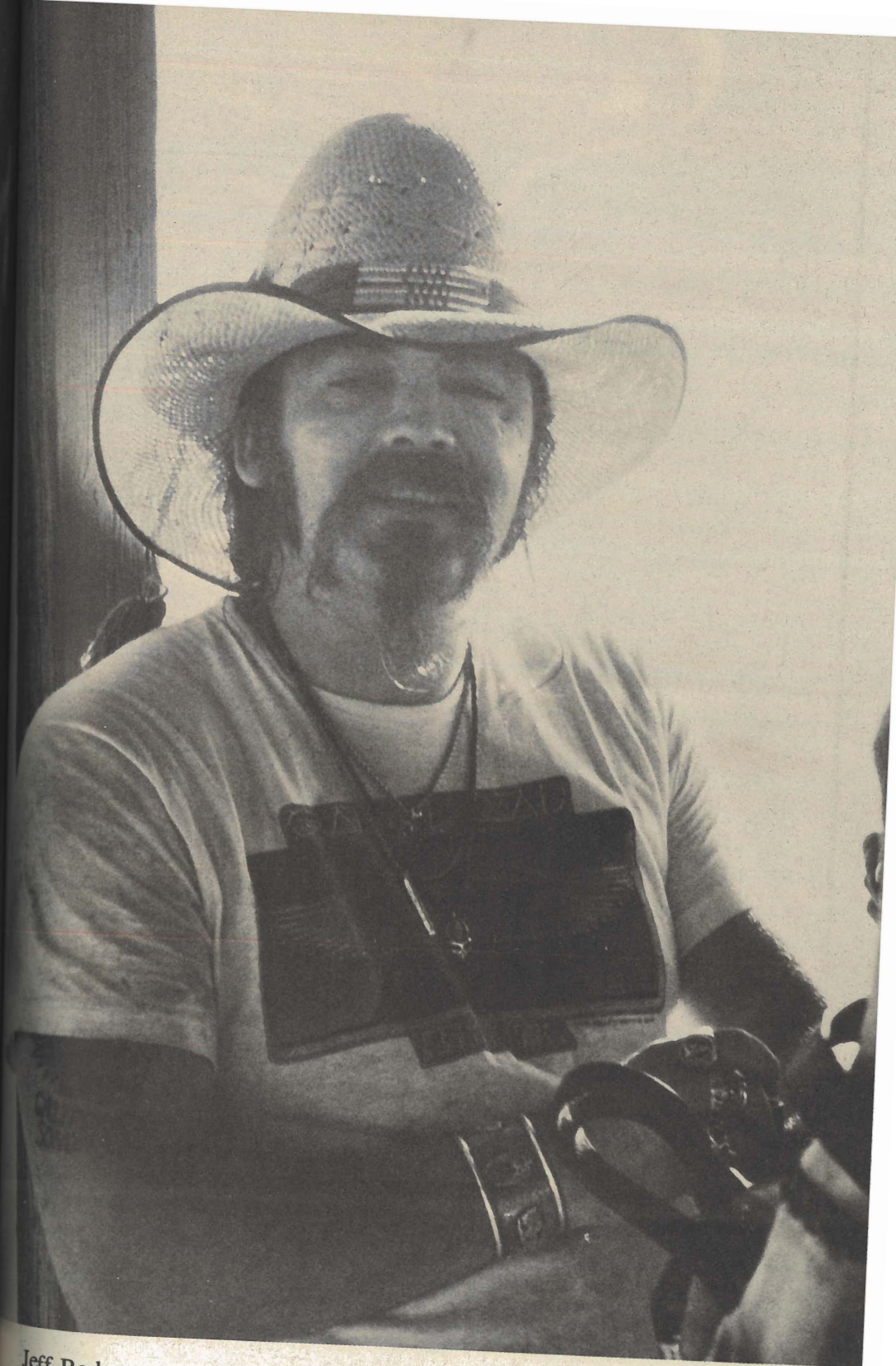
Grateful Dead Rockin'



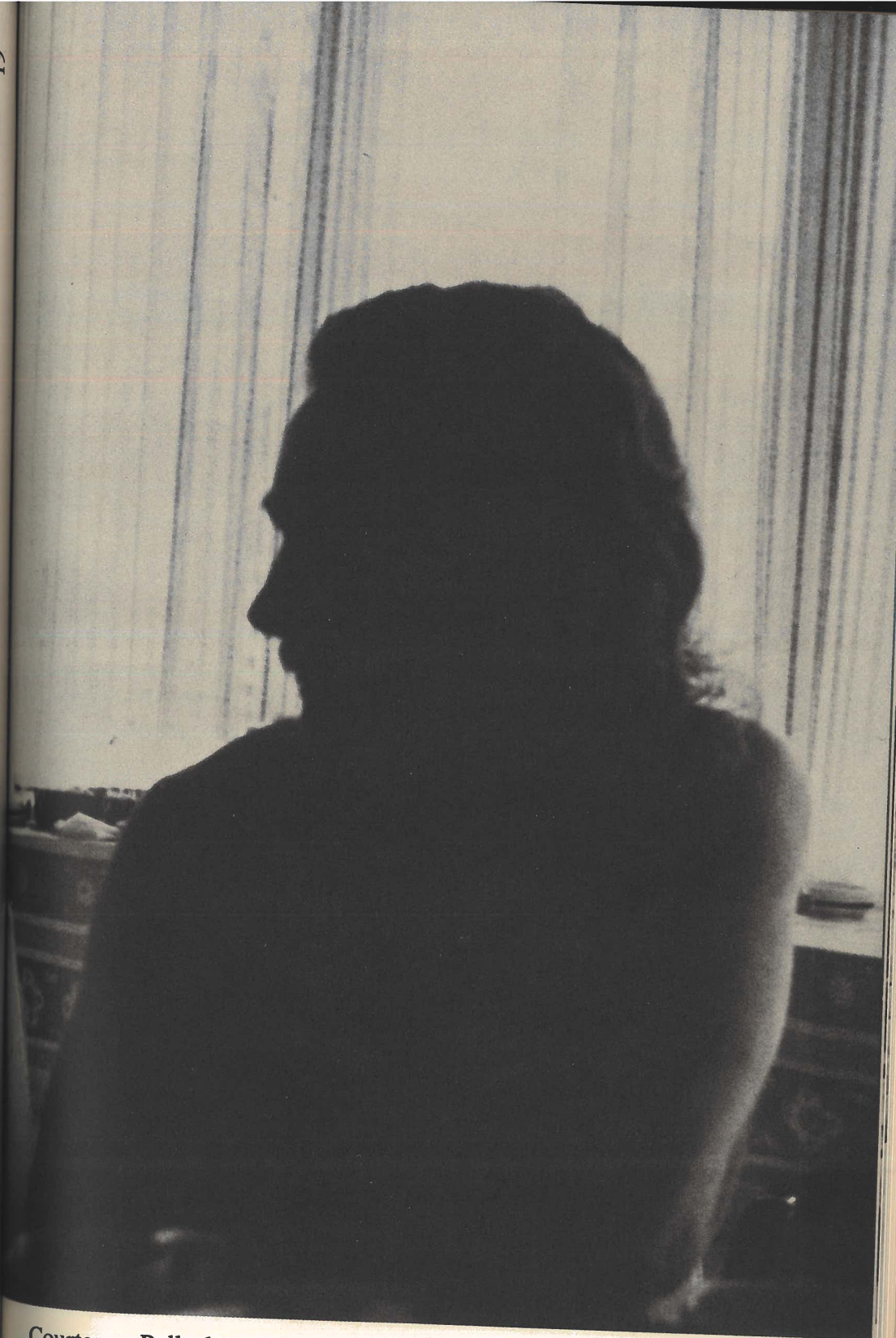
Jerry Garcia



Steve Parish



Jeff Boden



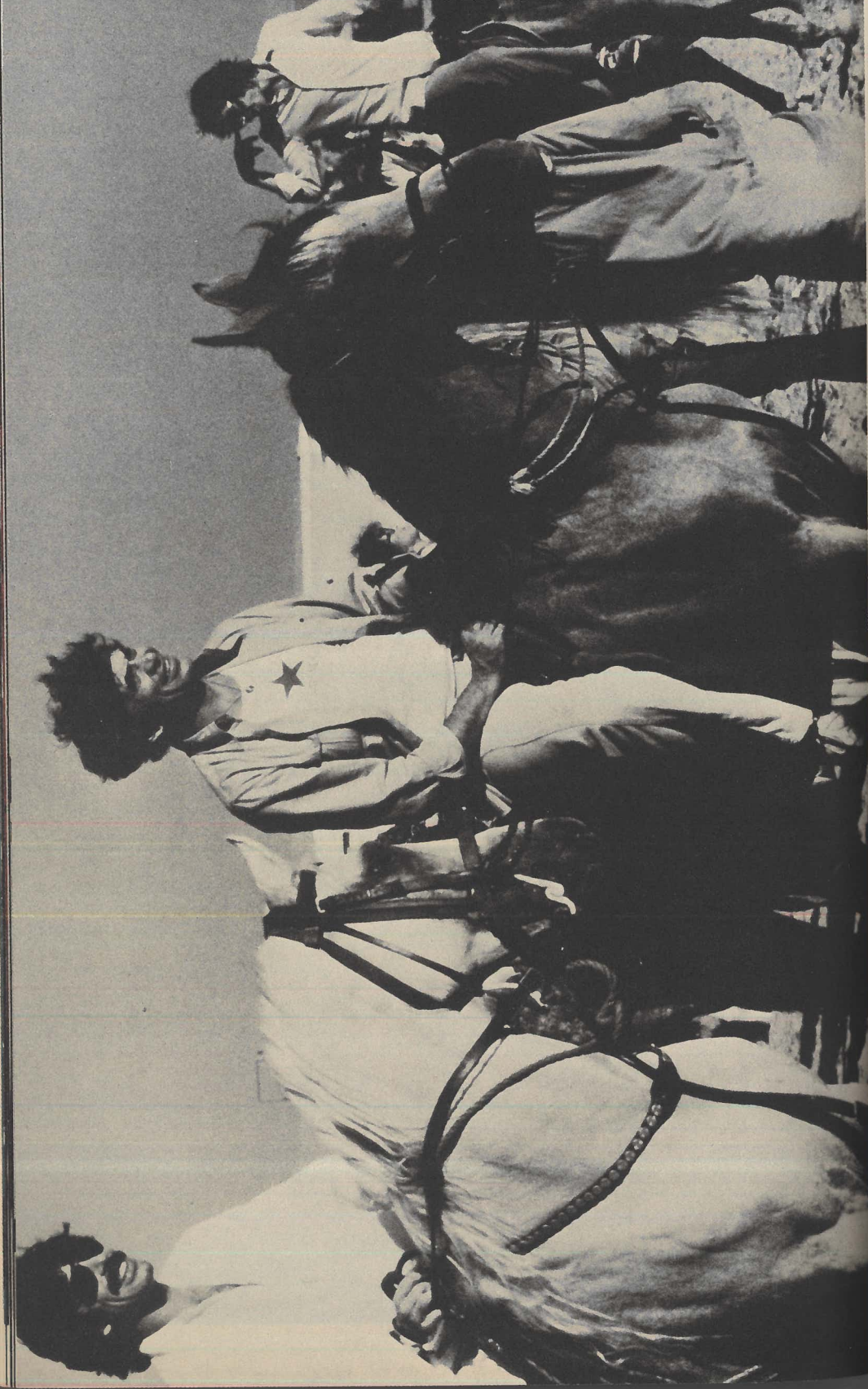
Courtenay Pollack



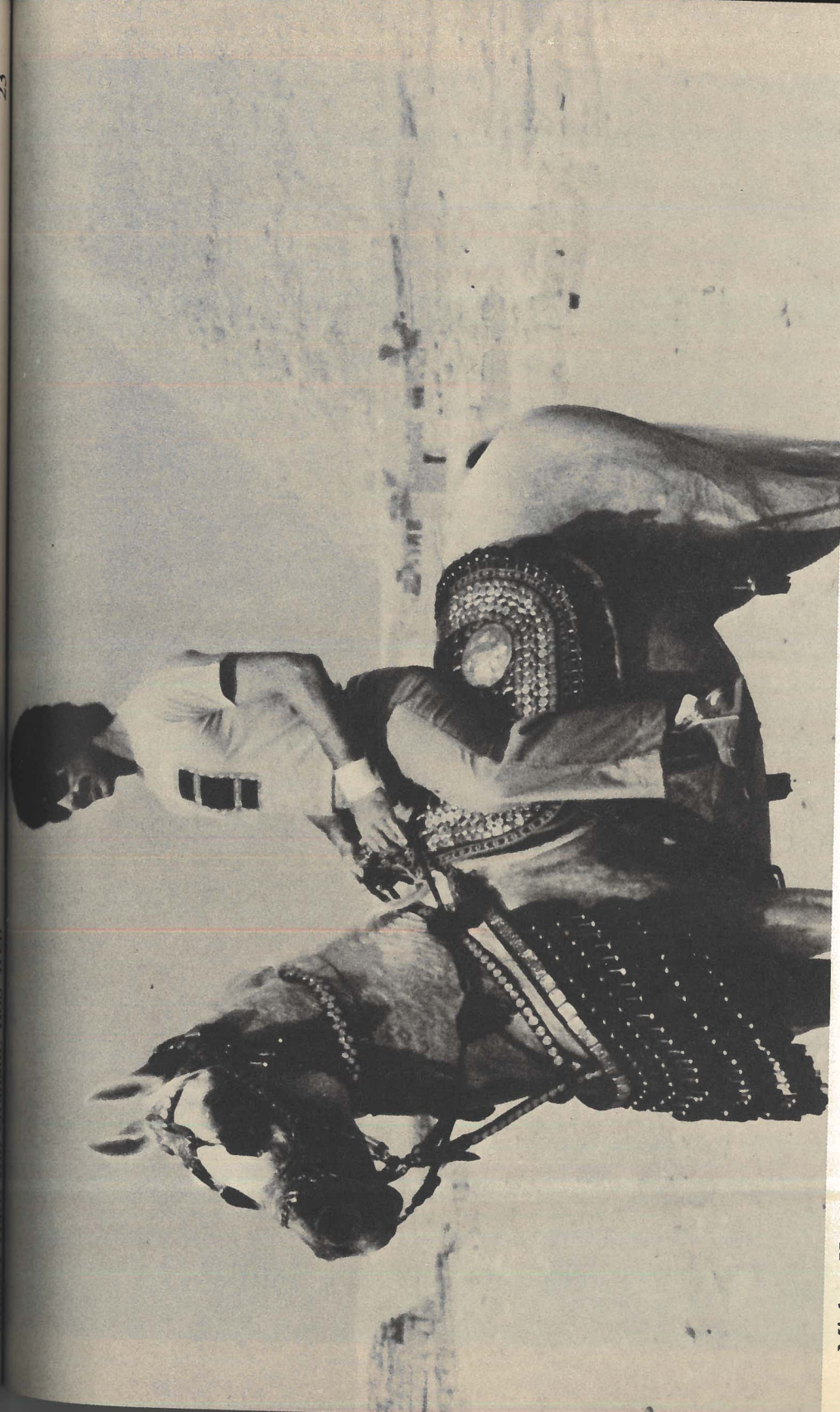
John Cutler, Abdul, Ram Rod



Ken Kesey atop Cheops



Mickey Hart, Bill Graham, Bob Weir



Mickey Hart



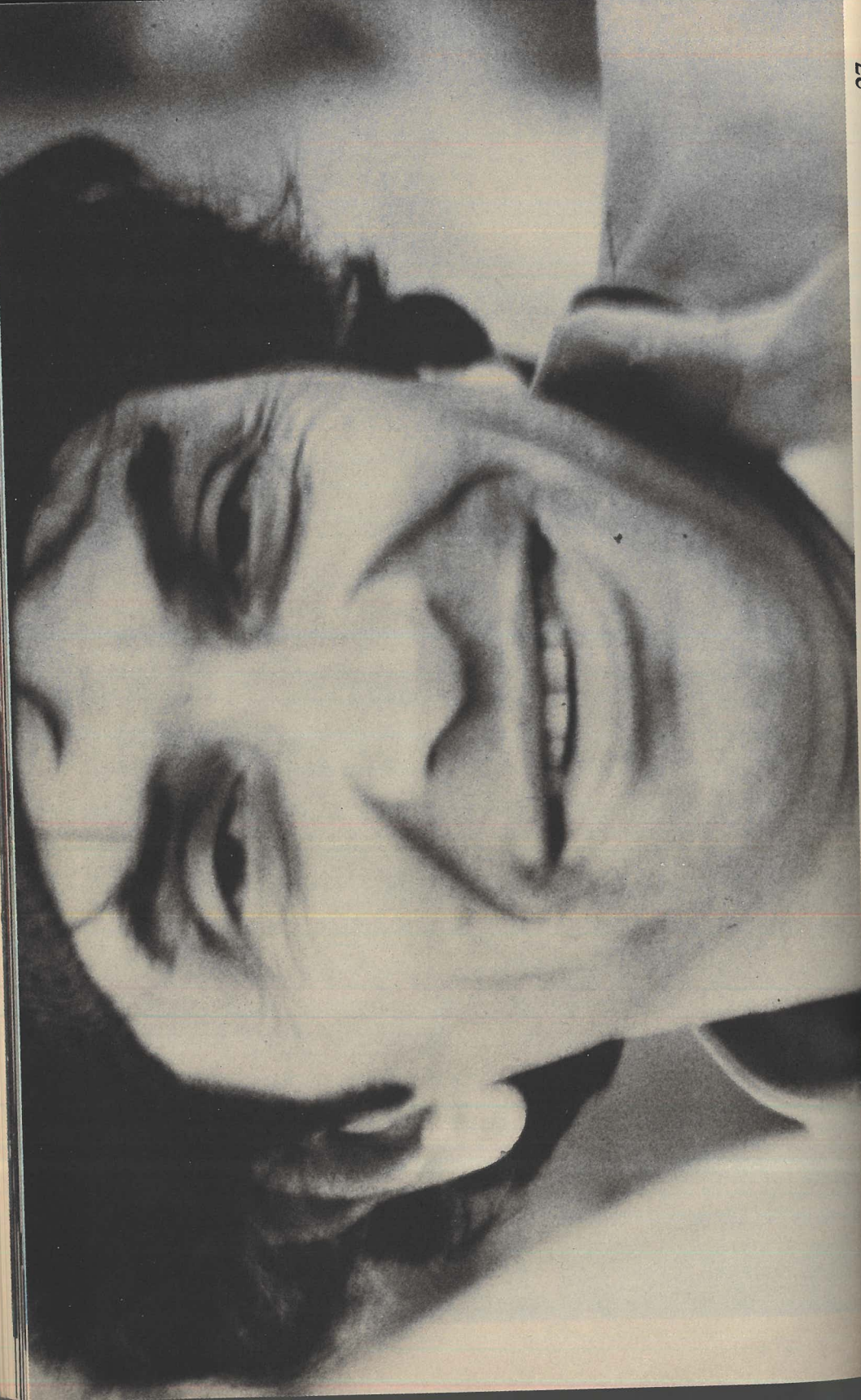
25

Jerry Garlin



Keith Godchaux

26



Courteney Pollack in Mena Village



Mena House Oberoi Hotel



Video Tape of Paul Krassner interviewing Robert Nichols by Ken Kesey



Bill 'Kidd' Candelario



Pyramid Road

32



Alabaster Sphinx

34



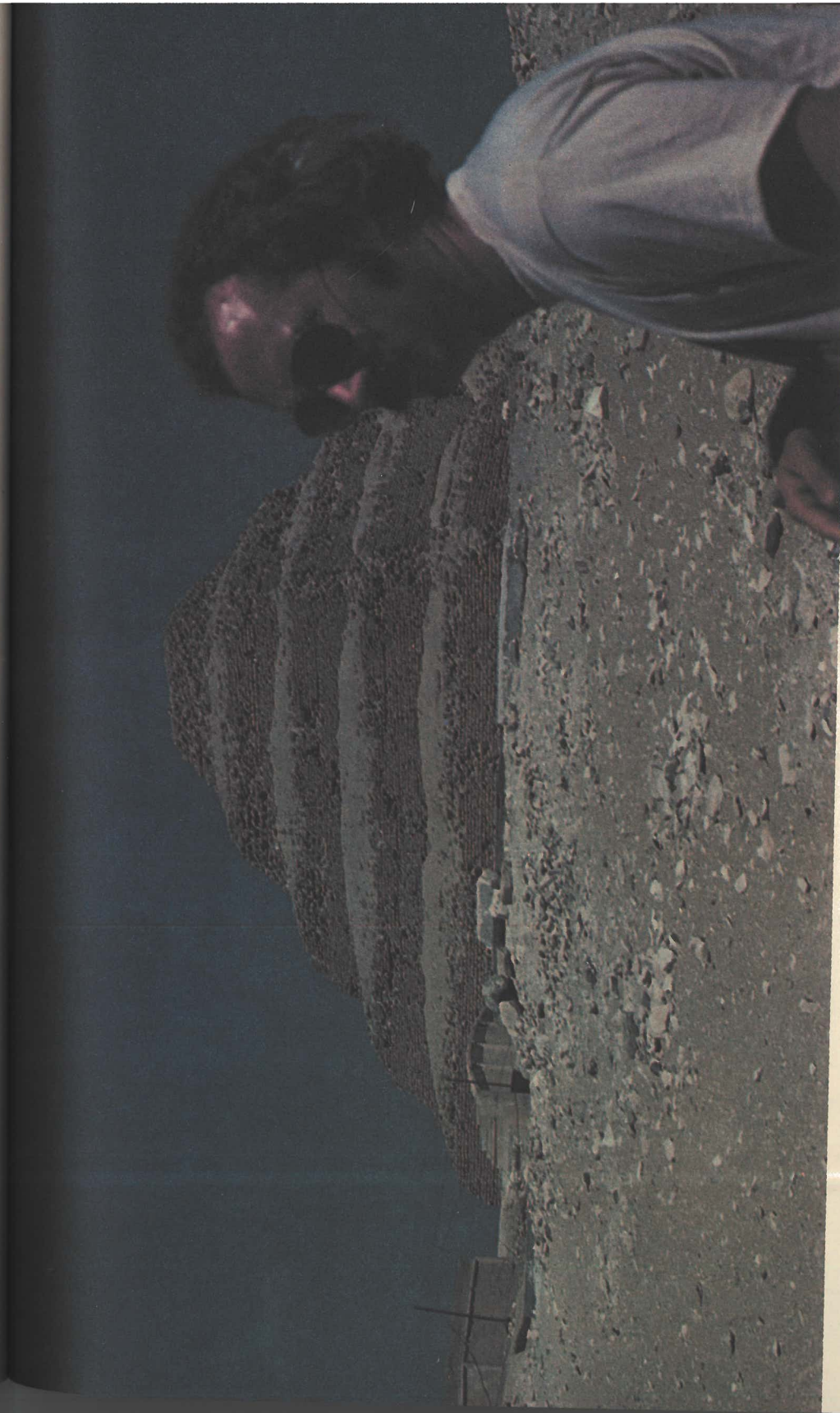
Mena Village

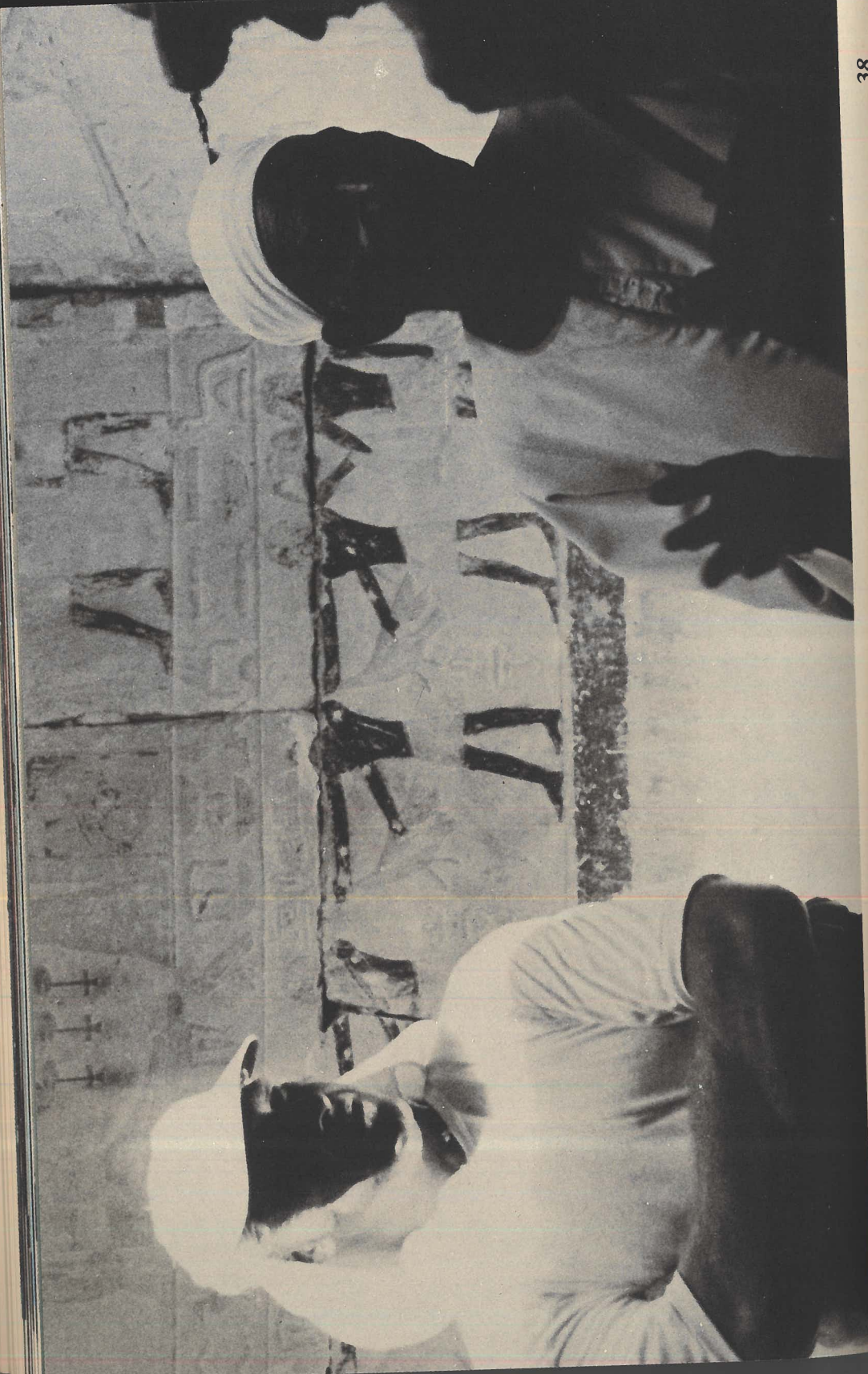
33



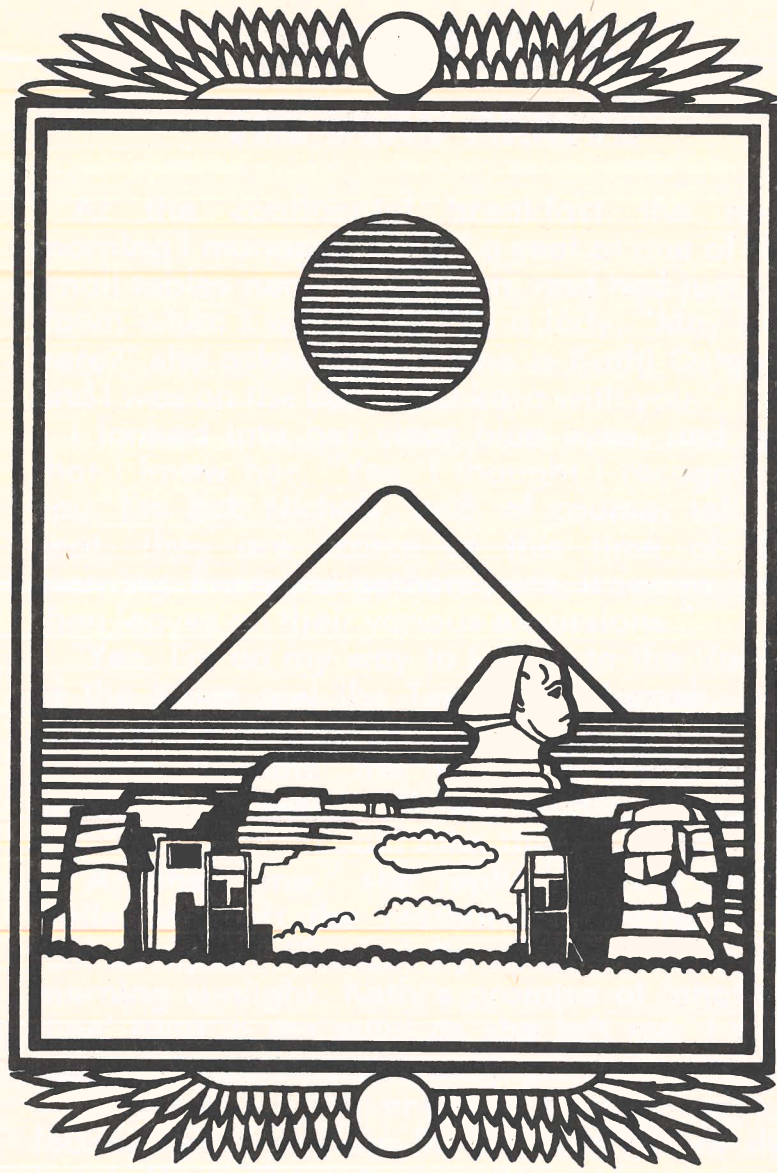
Cheop's Entrances

35





Ken Kesey and Mohammed





CHAPTER SEVEN

THE DEAD ARRIVE

At the continental breakfast the next morning I managed to find a seat at one of the small tables near the kitchen, and had just sat down when I was joined by a lady, "May I sit here?" she asked. "My name is Kathi Osteen, and I was on the bus to Sakkara with you."

I looked into her clear blue eyes, and felt that I knew her, "Yes, I thought I recognized you. I'm Bob Nichols, and, of course, take a seat, they are scarce at this time of the morning. Everyone gathers here, it seems, and then leaves on their various excursions."

"Yes, I'm on my way to Luxor, to the Valley of the Kings and the Temple at Karnak. Are you going to get down there?" she asked.

"No, I think the Grateful Dead have arrived, and maybe I'll help unload the gear. I wish now that I could take the trip," I hinted.

"Another time," she replied with a sweet smile. We left the restaurant together and looked up at Cheops' Pyramid in the early morning sunlight. Kathi's promise of 'another time' rang in my mind as she left me: I was feeling great, I mean, really good! As I stood in the bright sunlight enjoying the warm rays, I looked up to see Big Steve come out of the hotel. He broke into a smile, and came my way. "Hi, Nichols! I didn't know you were in Egypt. It's good to see you," he said. We shook hands, then grabbed each other in a big bear hug, both of us feeling good: we danced there

in a circle on the concrete sidewalk.

Garcia saw us as he came out of the hotel, and joined in our circle. The three of us danced in the sunlight and in the ecstasy of friendship we laughed, and threw our bodies about. Finally exhausted and breathing deeply, we broke the circle, still laughing.

Steve was on his way to meet the gear at the Sphinx stage, so we left Jerry there and hailed a taxi for the ride. The driver honked his way through the camels and donkeys on Pyramid Road, as tour buses let out their continuous stream of tourists. Hawkers sold it all: everything! What seemed apparent pandemonium to me was everyday life to these Egyptians.

Ram Rod, Hagen, Kidd and Healy were already at the stage and the truck had backed as close as it could get. Egyptian guards had been selected to watch the equipment around the clock, and to help us with anything else we might need. This crew was headed up by an old man of at least 75 years. Toothless and wrinkled, he was a character as he ordered the others around with great flair: shouting in Egyptian, he waved his arms about and the others hurried to do his will.

"That one must be the boss," said Ram Rod as he watched the old Egyptian. Hearing this, the old man turned and said, "No, not the boss," and with a great sweeping bow added, "the General--I am Abdul, your servant."

He drew himself up before us and rocked on the balls of his feet, head high and chest out, saying, "I was a Colonel for twenty years in the Egyptian Army, and served as the right hand of a very powerful English General. I know how to work men." He pointed to his ragtag crew and they were a sight. All dressed in

turbans and galabeas, they appeared to be mostly older men, perhaps in their fifties or sixties. At Abdul's command they all drew themselves up and claimed ready for any chore.

The soft sand around the stage prevented the equipment truck from getting any closer than about thirty yards, and we started dragging the heavy gear toward the stage. The Egyptians were anxious to help, and they pulled and pushed the dead weight over the loose sand, muscling it onto the stage. Abdul proudly announced that he had found enough lumber to build a shaky runway over the sand--wood is very scarce in Egypt, he said.

I passed the two-wheeled hand-truck to one of the Egyptians, who grabbed it, and holding it high in the air, ran to the stage! "No, No!" I yelled, "Bring that back! We carry the gear on that!"

Slowly he walked back to me, still carrying the thing, and looking confused. I saw the hand-truck was totally unfamiliar to him: he had no idea what to do with it. I took it from him and loaded it with one of the speaker boxes, showing him how easily it wheeled across the somewhat shaky wooden runway. He lit up with understanding, took it from me and thereafter ran furious trips back and forth between the truck and the stage. He would not let it go, claiming to the others that I had given him that job. Simple people, like children in many ways, I thought.

We put seventeen tons of the band's gear on the stage in the blazing desert sun, and I was soaked with perspiration when we finished. The equipment wouldn't be set up until the next day, and once on stage, Abdul put his men at every possible approach to guard the

gear. Steve asked me to stay with the Egyptians for a while, and saying they would return shortly, the crew left me with Abdul and his motley bunch.

I tried to find shelter from the hot sun, but this was not so easy as the whole area is totally exposed to the elements. Abdul came to the rescue and, realizing my plight, began to stack up the crates and boxes until he had made a kind of little room, and this he covered with a cloth. "Come into my tent," said Abdul, "and relax. My men are in control and they are dependable. In youth there are mistakes made, but in my men there is the wisdom of age and experience."

We seated ourselves in the protection of the shade and Abdul said to me, "Do you know what a scarab is?" He passed me a small replica of a beetle carved in alabaster stone.

"It's beautiful, Abdul. That's a really nice piece."

"The Scarab," he said, "is a golden beetle and in the desert you find them living in the camel dung, which symbolizes the soul of man encased in the flesh. You may have that. In my country it is the custom that if one man likes the possession of another he must give it to him. Take that home with you."

"Awww, I couldn't do that," I protested his generosity.

"Yes, you may keep the Scarab," Abdul stated, "but it is also the custom in my country that you may repay this deed with baksheesh. I can accept some money. Not much, though, perhaps one American dollar."

"Okay, Abdul, you got a deal!" I pulled out my money. I had a ten and two singles, and Abdul took careful note of this as I passed him the single dollar bill.

We sat in silence for a while, Abdul said he was very tired, that he had a young wife who just wouldn't be satisfied, and she kept him up late, night after night. "Without the hashish I do not think I could make it," he said. "Do you like hashish?"

"Yes, Abdul, I like hashish." Thinking I would save some time here, I went straight to the heart of the subject, "How much is it, Abdul?" To which he promptly replied, "Eleven dollars!"

"Amal!" yelled Abdul, and in the doorway of our little makeshift tent appeared one of the few younger men of the group. "This is my son-in-law, Amal," said Abdul. "He is married to my youngest daughter, and he lives with me."

The two spoke rapidly in Egyptian and Amal disappeared among the packing cases, in minutes reappearing with a ball of hashish. I found some tinfoil in one of the packing crates and fashioned a pipe in which to smoke the hash: the Egyptians found this very strange! Instead, they rolled the hash between their palms forming toothpick-sized sticks. They used a nail to poke a hole in the center of a cigarette, then squeezed the hash stick down into the hole. Most Egyptian men smoke cigarettes anyway, one after another, it seemed, and consume lots of sugar. Pepsi's are a big hit!

The heat was more bearable now, and my money was all gone, but you know what they say about that.

I had a great thirst, as my body was constantly perspiring, and no matter how much I drank I still felt like I was dehydrating in the scorching sun. Amal served me "khat" and brought large bottles of Evian mineral water and finally introduced me to Egyptian beer in

giant bottles, a full liter--good ole Stella beer! Abdul eyed me as I sipped from the big bottles of beer and said, "Tomorrow I will bring you a shirt from my village. We are famous for our tailors!"

Parish returned late in the afternoon, and we hung out with Abdul and the others, laughing and kidding with them. Steve really had Abdul going and the old man was parading up and down the stage, his galabea flowing out, his eyes glistening under the white turban declaring, "I have the Heart of a Camel! I have outlived eight of my wives, and even now I must have a young woman!"

Ram Rod and Healy tried to figure the location of the south shaft to the King's Chamber. "It's at 32 degrees and points to the constellation of Orion," said Ram Rod, "and if we can locate it, we will run the wire down the shaft into the Chamber."

"Let's go look for it," said Healy.

"Come with us, Nichols," said Ram Rod. "I think we need help on this project. We can pay you for your time, we need someone to help Cutler string the wire, and no telling what else." My friend looked at me and I said, "You bet, Ram Rod. I'd love that."

The south side of the Pyramid is a restricted area, we were told, because the world's oldest boat was stored there in a specially-designed, climatic-conditioned building. Permission was finally granted for us to enter the area, but we were warned about climbing. The south side has not been cleaned off in centuries, and is mostly rubble and could crumble under body weight. "Awww," said Healy, "let's go for it."

Evening was slipping into darkness. The area at the base of the Pyramid and the odd-shaped boathouse are well-lit, but only a little

way up the pyramid, you start losing the light and it becomes difficult to see. "I don't know," I hesitated, "it looks pretty dangerous to me."

"You stay on the ground, Nichols," said Ram Rod, "in case we need something."

The Egyptian Army Officer guarding the restricted area stood next to me as the two men started their climb, and said, "Your friends are crazy. That is a very dangerous surface to walk on, and the hole they seek is very tiny." "Yes, I know," I said.

We stood near the odd-shaped building that housed the ancient vessel. "What's so special about this boat?" I asked him. "The ship is 47 centuries old, to begin with," said its proud keeper, "and there is another lying just over there. Yet to be excavated."

"The pit where the ship lay stored all those centuries, was discovered in 1954, and was sealed over with giant limestone blocks. Very little deterioration had taken place in the cedar wood, and piece by piece, the boat was painstakingly assembled and restored."

"It was Egypt's first major restoration project, all previous excavations were headed-up by foreign governments, and monies. Egypt's Chief Restorer, Amed Youssef Moustafa, spent fourteen years putting the 1,223 pieces together like a jig saw puzzle. It is 140 feet long."

"It is a Solar Vessel and was intended for King Cheop's eternal journey with the Sun god, Ra."

"Is it possible to see it? To get a little closer?" I ventured to ask.

"No, this is not permitted. It is not open to the public. Well, perhaps to some people, but it would have to be a person of rank," said the officer, "an important person, maybe someone

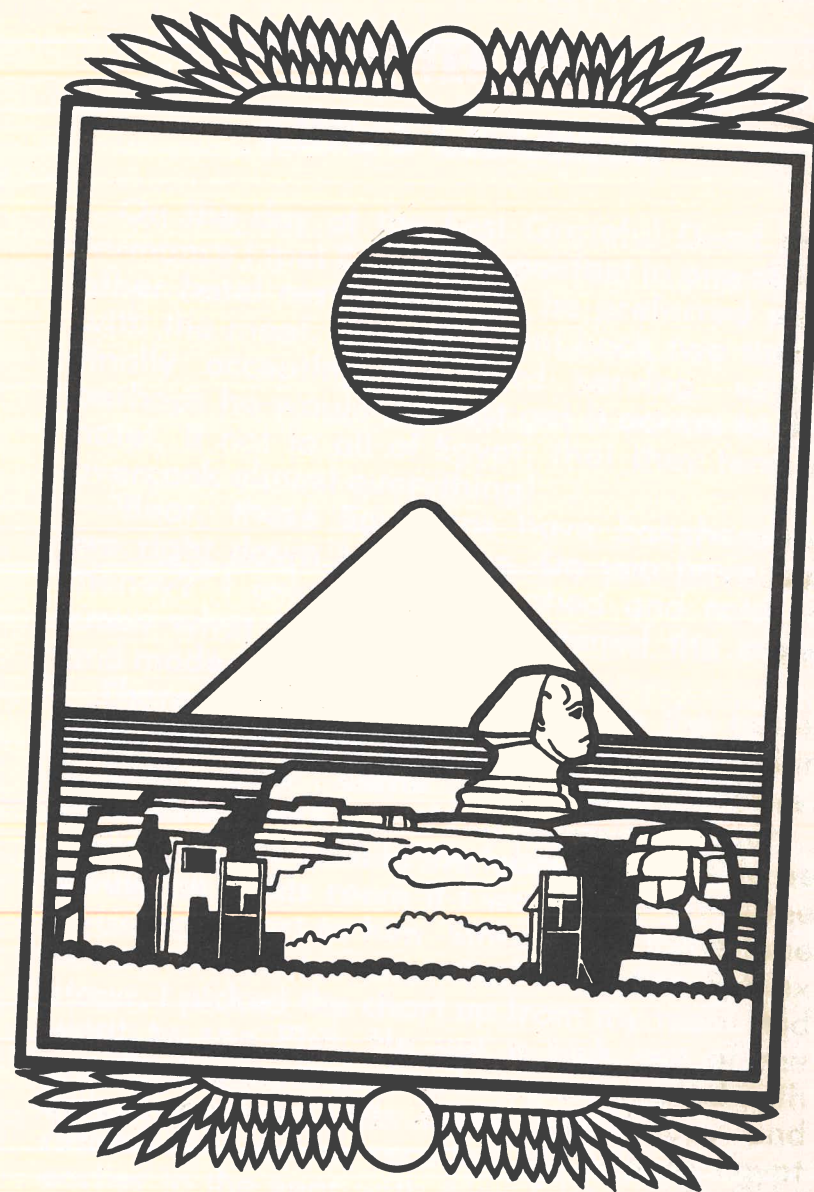
like Jimmy Carter. He is a peacemaker." I quickly caught his drift--the widely-publicized Camp David Peace Accords were in progress while we were in Egypt, and the Egyptians were very pro-America's effort to bring peace to the region. Carter, Sadat and Begin were diligently working out the final details of the agreements which would affect this area for years to follow.

Rubble slid down the south side of the Pyramid and Healy yells, "You find it yet, Ram Rod?"

"No, but I think it might be over this way." More rubble slides down toward us--the guard and I step back a few more feet. We can see nothing above us but we keep hearing their voices--more distant each time, and finally nothing. We waited in the chill of the evening air, and stared up at the void until our necks began to ache.

At long last, they appeared in the light and made their way down the last few feet sounding relieved to be able to see again. "No good," said Ram Rod. "We can't find it."

Safely down, I got the distinct feeling that both of them would think twice with hindsight, and I'm sure both took another look at that south surface with a shudder in the clear light of the next day!





CHAPTER EIGHT

KING'S CHAMBER

On the day of the first Grateful Dead performance I met Bear for breakfast in one of the other hotel restaurants, as he preferred eggs with the meal. These he sent back two times, finally accepting the third serving, saying perhaps he would at least get it across to this hotel, if not to all of Egypt, that they tend to overcook almost everything!

"Bear, these Egyptians have baksheeshed me right down to nothing. Do you have any money?" I asked. Bear laughed and said he knew what I meant, we lightened the mood and made plans for that day.

There was an exchange bank in the hotel, and Bear handed me a fistfull of Egyptian pounds and some American dollars. Altogether there was about a hundred dollars.

We saw Phil Lesh in the lobby and he said he would be in his room if I wanted to bring the Astrology chart to him. Since I had some time before I was to meet Cutler at the Sphinx stage, I picked the chart up from my room and went to see Phil. He got a kick out of me mentioning earthquakes being associated with Eclipse patterns. His mood was happy and reminiscent as he recalled his trip to Egypt earlier in the year with Alan Trist and Richard Loren to put these performances together with the Egyptian Minister of Tourism. "I did this," he said, "I started this all rolling and made it happen, and with that I achieved a life-long

dream--I always wanted to play at the Pyramids," he said, "since I was a little boy." This coming from a Pisces who in two days would perform at the Sphinx Theater, at the foot of the Great Pyramid on the Full Eclipse of the--what else--Pisces Moon! "All proceeds go to Egyptian charities," Phil said, "we're doing this one just for fun."

I left the chart with Phil and walked the distance to the Sphinx. On Pyramid Road I was accosted by the hawkers, but they were less bothersome now. I think my 'no' was improving.

The stage was bustling when I arrived, and Rob Taylor caught me right away. "I was told to put you on the payroll," he said, "with the same salary as the rest of us--same everything. We have taxis running to the hotel and back, and you can use those too. We can work out the details later, but now Cutler needs help."

Off to one side I listened as Jeff Boden tried to explain to John Hagen that there are no Levi's in Egypt, "Maybe Abdul can get you a galabea," he suggested.

John Culter was soldering wires together, and working on switches, moving about nervously. His hands shook as he tried to hold the wires, and I moved to help him. "We're late," he said, "and we have the wrong wire--a shipment was lost and we have to replace it with Egyptian wire. I'm not sure it's the same. My baggage was lost and ended up in Tokyo and I'm having to borrow clothes. I don't even have a toothbrush! Oh, well, all we can do is go for it!"

I liked his attitude, and as we gathered the materials, he explained our job. "We want to use the King's chamber as an echo chamber,

and to do this we have to broadcast from the stage to a receiver on the side of the Pyramid, running wires from an antenna there, to a speaker inside the King's Chamber. We pick up the signal and transmit it back to the control board on stage, and the King's Chamber, and the entire Pyramid becomes part of the Grateful Dead's sound system. We're going to wire up the King, and play music to him!"

Courtenay was taking measurements at places he would drape his tie-dyes, and he offered to help Cutler and I string the wire to the Pyramid, saying he would catch up with us when he finished his work.

Steve Parish pulled me to one side and said, "Keep an eye on Cutler for us, Bob. He's the fragile one of us, and this is his project--he's just a little nervous," he explained with care.

Abdul kept trying to approach me, but seeing I was busy, the old man would wink at me, mash his toothless gums together, and motion that he had something in his pocket. I walked over to him, and again, thinking to save some time, said, "Okay, Abdul, how much is it?"

"Ten American dollars," he said as he passed me the ball of hash, and quickly added, "and I have brought to you from my house this Ankh. It is the symbol of life, and you may take that home with you."

The Ankh was a hand-carved ivory cross about three inches long, with a loop at the top. Crudely fashioned, someone had taken a long time on the object, and I said, "It's beautiful, Abdul, thank you." The words rang in my ear as I knew the balance of this gesture would be baksheesh! "Okay, Abdul, how much is this thing?"

"Only one American dollar," he said, and

quickly added, "and, this beautiful shirt is for only five more dollars, and you owe me sixteen dollars." It was a very nice shirt, and I was careful that Abdul didn't see my money as I paid him off.

We abandoned the idea of using the dangerous southern shaft and decided the wire would run from the King's Chamber down the Grand Gallery into the tiny four-foot shaft and out the main entrance. From there we would run the wire parallel to the northeast corner, and from there, up the Pyramid as far as it took to get a clear shot at the Sphinx stage.

We brought the gear to the main entrance in a taxi, and were met by the old Moslem Keeper, Mohammed. "All arrangements have been made for you to have full use of my men as well as total access to the Pyramid," Mohammed told us, "and our tours will be conducted around you as you do your work. If we can be of any assistance, you have but to ask." He bowed low before us, and turned to lead us toward the entrance.

Courtenay caught up with us before we started our climb, and we split the equipment into three piles. The speaker was the worst of it, weighing about fifty pounds, in its heavy plywood box. It was thirty inches high and just barely fit into the four-foot shaft!

The speaker cabinet was my load, and I pushed it along, inches at a time. Then I got in front of it and tried to drag it; I tugged on the thing, both Cutler and Courtenay tried helping me, but there was just no way more than one of us could get at it at one time, and they were both loaded up as it was--I just kept fighting the thing. The humidity was terrible and I was soaking wet long before we reached the Grand Gallery where I could finally stand up and

carry the cabinet. I definitely had the feeling I had carried loads up those steps before!

We stopped to rest at the Grand Gallery and Cutler looked pale. I thought he might be carrying too much weight so I asked if that was the problem. "No," he said, "I suffer from a lot of mental disorders, one of them being claustrophobia. I don't feel able to breathe and the walls are all closing in on me! I might not be able to take this--I may have to give the whole thing up! I think I've got to get out of here! No mental institution was ever like this!"

Courtenay and I were quick to catch on to this and began to reassure him. It would pass, we said. Come on, we would go on up and it would pass. We started up toward the King's Death Chamber and he did seem to settle down. We talked him on, making light of what had happened.

Once inside the chamber John was much better, and he set right to work on the electronic gear, as I started running the wire we would need back down the Grand Gallery and into the tiny shaft. I taped the wire to whatever I could find on my way down--the going was slow, a few feet at a time.

As luck would have it, I met Mohammed head on about halfway down the small shaft and crouched to one side as the entire tour squeezed past me, "Excuse me, excuse me, excuse me."

At the entrance the wire ended, and I started a new roll of the Egyptian wire. I went to the northeast corner of the Pyramid, but not knowing how high up to go, I stopped there and went back to the King's Chamber.

Cutler was bent over the speaker making the final connections when his soldering gun

went dead! "I know I put new batteries in it," John said, "because I knew there were no electrical outlets in here. I just don't understand it."

He frantically searched through the gear for more batteries, but to no avail. "We will just have to temporarily twist the wire together, and I'll make the soldered connections later," he said.

Cutler inspected my wiring job all the way to the entrance and there he spliced the Egyptian wire in for the run to the corner and up as high as was needed to an antenna aimed at the stage.

As we eased our way along the rubble--in places our footing was shaky--Courtenay and I urged John along. At the corner John began giving me very explicit instructions on how the connections had to be made to the antenna, which we would carry up with us. He said there was no way he could possibly climb any higher, and even if he did manage to get up high enough to see the stage, he would never get down again, because that was the worst part. "I just can't look down," he claimed, "and here we're only about fifty feet up--what will it be like at 200 or maybe even 300 feet!"

We were running out of time if we were going to use this thing on the first gig. The sound check was long passed and the sun was headed toward setting. Cutler found new energy, "I've got to make it!"

The antenna was our last hook-up, and with renewed determination, Cutler began the dangerous climb, one foot at a time, up the Great Pyramid.

One or another of the Moslem Keepers had been with us all day, and now a frail thin man led us from rock to rock. We had to boost each

other at places and the going was not easy anywhere, but somehow we kept moving upward.

We must have been more than two hundred feet up before we rose above the buildings of Mena Village which blocked our view of the Sphinx Stage and the control board. We set the antenna there, but had another problem because there was no way to mount it. The tripod had to be firmly attached to something or the powerful desert winds would simply blow it away!

We had brought some of the gear up in plastic bags and tried filling them with rubble--sand and small stones, but it was not enough to anchor the antenna.

I kept looking for something heavier. I climbed up another tier of the Pyramid's surface, and scooted along until I saw a large fragment of stone that was breaking from the larger building block. I kicked at it, it gave a little. I pulled on it, and kicked it some more, and it gave a little more. I worked feverishly on it and managed to wrest the stone from its ancient resting place: put there eons ago by another's hand, I thought as I placed it on the antenna's tripod.

Music was coming from the stage area as the Grateful Dead went into their performance. We had 2-way radios to the control board and Healy said, "Well, what's the haps? Are we cooking, or what?"

"One more minute," said Cutler, "and I'll have it by the time they finish the first number. Just a little bit to go."

"Okay, I'm ready," said John and he threw all the switches. Nothing happened--nothing!

"Well, what the hell," he said, "I just don't care anymore. Let's go on stage and listen to

the music." With that, he turned and started down the Pyramid as if he had never had a phobia, no one had to help him, and he was even leading our Moslem guide at the bottom! He had had one tough day!

The live music of the Grateful Dead penetrated the desert and flowed through Mena Village. The moon hung like a big orange balloon, and people were leaning out their windows, clapping their hands. They danced in groups here and there on the sand dunes surrounding the Sphinx stage, and while they had never heard much rock and roll before, they were not without rhythm.

People were dancing all the way to the stage. Some were sitting atop camels for a better view. The whole spectacle was truly enchanting. Always teeming with life anyway, the village now moved in a surreal dance, swaying and spinning in circles, as the Egyptians clasped hands, forming larger circles.

Near the stage I noticed the audience in the theatre area was mostly men, and completely void of Egyptian ladies, but all were in a joyful mood. Abdul danced with a bottle of Stella in each hand. Kicking wildly and holding the bottles high, he spun in circles and flared his galabea out; his eyes glistened in his leathery old face as he tossed his turban about. Lots of life in that old boy, I thought as I watched his dervish dance.

It was no different on stage as everyone had big smiles and some danced around. I found Ram Rod with his lady, Frances, and he said not to worry about the King's Chamber, that we were going to be here three days and we would try again tomorrow.

The band played a somewhat short set--at

least for them, and it seemed they ended the night a little early also, but I knew from experience that this was just a warm-up. Tomorrow would be better and on the third night they would be cooking. These things build as they go, gaining momentum.

I heard Jeff Boden ask anyone listening, "How much beer we gonna' feed these Egyptians?"

I had had a long day and was exhausted by the events and went looking for that bed again.

will have a very good time and will
be very happy to see you all.

Love from
Mama and Papa

The children are all well and
happy and are looking forward to
seeing you all.

Write soon and let us hear
from you all.

With love
Mama and Papa

The children are all well and
happy and are looking forward to
seeing you all.

Write soon and let us hear
from you all.

With love
Mama and Papa

The children are all well and
happy and are looking forward to
seeing you all.

Write soon and let us hear
from you all.

With love
Mama and Papa

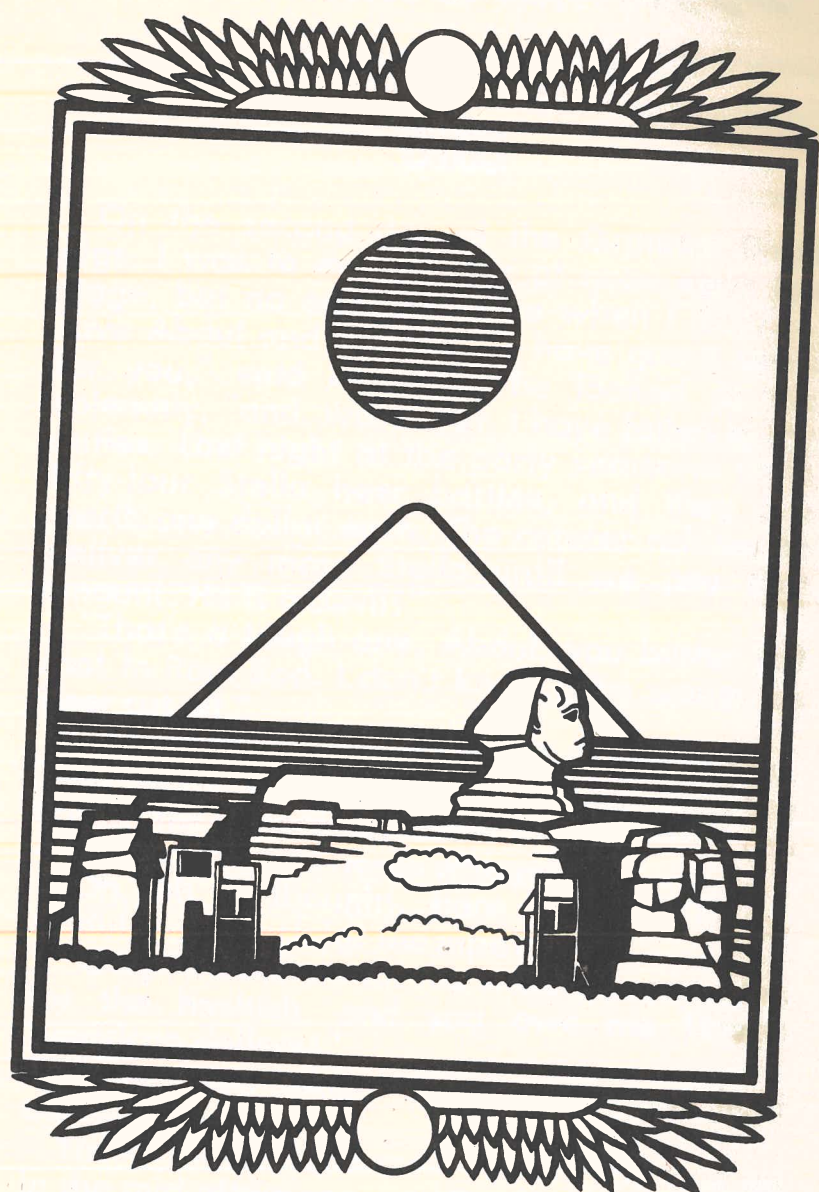
The children are all well and
happy and are looking forward to
seeing you all.

Write soon and let us hear
from you all.

With love
Mama and Papa

The children are all well and
happy and are looking forward to
seeing you all.

Write soon and let us hear
from you all.





CHAPTER NINE

GIGS

On the second day of the Grateful Dead gigs, I was to meet Cutler at noon near the stage, but no one was there when I arrived, save Abdul and his men. "I have grave news for you," said Abdul as he looked at me solemnly, "and, worse yet, I have failed in my duties. Last night at the party someone stole fifty-four Stella beer bottles, and they are worth one dollar each. The caterer refuses to deliver any more Stella until we pay that amount. He is a devil!"

"That's a tough one, Abdul, you better tell that to Ram Rod. I don't know if he wants his beer cut off."

"Meanwhile, I have hashish," said Abdul, "and today I have brought to you from my house this waterpipe. Come into my tent. You may take the pipe home with you."

Oh, oh, I thought, here we go. "Okay, Abdul, how much for the pipe?"

"Only five dollars for the waterpipe, and ten for the hashish, and you owe me fifteen American dollars!"

"Take three tokes," he advised, "and hold the last one."

The Grateful Dead crew started showing up in the mid-afternoon, and Ram Rod said Cutler wouldn't answer his phone, or come out of his room. "Someone else could take over, maybe, but they all have their own things to do, and this one is Cutler's project. But," he added,

"we're not giving up yet, maybe we can lure him out of there somehow."

Steve Parish was razzing Abdul as he worked around the equipment, and again, he had the old man going. I stood nearby and Steve kept winking at me, while playing with everyone around him. The mood was building!

"Nichols," Parish said, "I don't know if I'm going to the King's Chamber or not, and I'd like to have a rock from there. I don't mean break something up, but if you find a small stone, would you bring it to me?"

Candelario was with us and as he walked away, over his shoulder he said, "Yeah, Nichols, me too. I'd like to have a rock."

Ram Rod bought a camel blanket right off the camel! I mean literally on the spot. With a great flourish of the blanket, the Egyptian pulled it from the animal, and after haggling over the price with Ram Rod, swirled the colorful garment in the air as he threw it to him.

The hot afternoon dragged on and the Stella beer was delivered, so I assumed someone had payed the ransom. "Put that beer somewhere that I can keep my eye on it," said Jeff Boden, to which Ram Rod replied, "Where WE can keep an eye on it."

As we neared showtime, there seemed to be about as many people on stage as there were out front, and most of them were Egyptians. Some were dressed in bright white turbans and flowing white galabeas, and they marched through the throng of people beating on tambourines and chanting.

This group was led by Hamsa El Din, world-renowned Nubian musician, and a long-time associate of members of the Grateful Dead. Hamsa had indeed introduced us to Egypt, and

appeared on Egyptian television to describe us to the people. Now he was opening the show.

"That's the Cairo Youth Choir with Hamsa," I was told. I looked at the past-middle-age men, some in their fifties at least and said, "Youth Choir?" Maybe it takes that long to get that good, I thought, as I watched them perform.

Mickey Hart and Billy Kreutzmann played with the percussion group for a while, and slowly took over as the Choir filed off stage.

Bobby Weir wore a beautiful white Egyptian shirt, and I wondered if Abdul had brought that from his famous village tailors.

The Moon was nearing full and hung over the horizon of Mena Village, just above our heads!

The crowd on stage thinned out and I saw John Cutler standing just down from me. That's how they got him to come out of his room, I thought, he couldn't resist the music. "I had to work on some things today, personal things," John said. "But if you will meet me tomorrow at noon, we'll finish this job up. I think I can make it work if I could solder those connections, and at least it's worth one last shot."

Tall, red-headed Bill Walton of basketball fame, on crutches with a cast on his foot, danced over the heads of everyone on stage, smiling from ear to ear. The Grateful Dead's music weaved its way through us, out into the desert, through the Village, and on to the Moon!

The evening passed too quickly but had definitely gained momentum. I rode in a taxi back to the hotel with the Grateful Dead's diplomatic financial manager, Alan Trist, and we discussed the failure of the King's Chamber.

"Other things have been known to fail inside

the Pyramid--electrical things, and cameras," Alan said in his British accent, "but I really thought we could evoke enough magic to gain the King's permission."

"There is a kind of energy in the Pyramid that preserves fruit indefinitely, and will sharpen a razor blade," I answered. "There are so many stories, so many legends that one doesn't know what to believe. Some think the Pyramid was built by extra-terrestrials, and the massive stones had to be levitated into place by some kind of magic. Others claim there are curses involved--I don't know about that, but I do feel an energy. It's a tomb," I added.

"Yes, and it's mathematically perfect and in complete alignment with the stars. How could they have amassed all that one thousand years before the invention of the wheel?" asked Alan, puzzled.

The taxi driver almost smacked another vehicle as he sped through an intersection. Cursing and shaking his fist at the other driver, he said over his shoulder to us, "We do not like traffic lights in Egypt, because like the telephone lines, they were installed underground by the English who took the diagrams with them when they finally left. Nothing can be found to be repaired."

On the morning of the third and final Grateful Dead gig, I met Bear and Isabelle for breakfast. We seated ourselves at a table, but no one moved to serve us--we couldn't even get a menu! "See Bear," I said, "now it all catches up with you. You have sent your food back so many times that these people no longer want to serve us."

"I don't think so, Bob. I think it's just an oversight. They just haven't noticed us sitting here yet."

"He's right, Bear," Isabelle joined me, "They have to prepare your meals two or three times in order to get you to pay for one. You can't blame them."

Finally Bear managed to catch one of the waiters and we were served, but I took note that he did not return anything to the kitchen. "The quality of the food in this restaurant has already improved," said Bear. "My method is very effective."

John Cutler was at the stage when I arrived and was talking with Dan Healy and Harry Popick. Both engineers offered advice to John and were very supportive. "Run another antenna from the top of the Sphinx," offered Harry. "There you would be just above the stage."

Courtenay and John went to the King's Chamber to begin soldering the electrical connections, and I put together the materials for the additional antenna. I climbed up the Sphinx, again a very restricted area, and found a clear sight of the first antenna at the Pyramid. I was very careful with my footing as I made my way along the half-man, half-beast, the rock was very crumbly. I felt I was treading on sacred ground as I mounted the antenna.

Abdul helped me with the ladder going up and down, and he kept pointing at his pocket, winking and making motions. "Abdul, I have no money," I said, "I'm just a working man like you, in fact I just got this job."

"You have no money?" He looked surprised and shocked, "and you have no hashish? I cannot leave you like that. It is the custom of my Country, and I give this to you, my friend." He handed me the hash and turned and walked away.

In the King's Chamber Cutler gave me a 2-

way radio and said to check my wiring to see that it hadn't been cut or something, and then to wait at the antenna.

Since radios wouldn't work inside the pyramid we set up a relay system, and on one channel I had Healy at the stage and on the other I had Courtenay at the entrance. Alan Trist relayed messages from the Grand Gallery.

I sat with my Moslem guide and watched the hot afternoon change to early evening.

"Has he got it yet?" "No, I don't think so."

Powerful desert winds began to blow sand at us. My guide sat cross-legged with his back to it and formed his galabea into a miniature tent, pulling the hem up over his head. He sat inside his garment perfectly protected. Now I know why they wear those things, I thought, as I huddled as close to the rock as I could get.

The sun moved toward setting and the Moon began to rise, just beginning to cover the surface of the Moon was the shadow of the Earth! The Eclipse was happening and the Grateful Dead went into "Bertha." The concert was on!

"Has he got it yet?" "No, I don't think so."

People began beating on pots and pans in the Village, marching up and down the streets. At first I thought it was a reaction to the music, but no, my guide said, "They are driving the demons from our Village. This is an age-old custom at Eclipses," he explained.

"Has he got it yet?" "No, I don't think so."

"Hell, come down on the stage, it just wasn't meant to be."

If our efforts to wire the King's Chamber were a failure one would have never known it by the reaction of the people I passed on my way to the stage. They danced under the

eclipsing Moon along the sand dunes, and all of Pyramid Road moved in rhythm to the tune of "Deal."

At the stage I made my way toward Steve Parish and he was talking with Bill Graham and Bill Candelario. "Here, Steve, I found this rock inside the Pyramid." I passed him the largest one of several stones that I had picked up as I checked my wiring earlier in the day, and I handed another to Candelario.

"What's that?" asked Bill Graham. I explained the story to him and offered him one of the stones. He clasped the stone between his hands and rolled his eyes upward, "Can't you just feel it? The beauty of this Country--the mystery, the intrigue." He spun and danced in a wide circle, oblivious to all for just an instant, while the band played "Sugar Magnolia."

Why did you give Steve the biggest one?" asked Candelario. "I want a bigger one. Get me a bigger one when you bring the gear out tomorrow."

"Kidd," I said, "take that stone and stick it in your pocket!"

Mountain Girl was leaning on some cases watching the band perform and I approached her. I know she prefers to be called 'Carolyn,' but I slipped up as I greeted her, "Hi, M.G., er, I mean, Carolyn!"

"Hi, Nichols. Have you met Blaze yet?" A young blonde-headed, light-skinned youth of about sixteen offered his hand and I took it. "His father is in the military, and he's lived in Egypt since he was six years old. He was born in the States, but he's never even heard of the Grateful Dead nor Bill Graham! You see," Mountain Girl went on, "we're just a tiny little wave, a speck in the Universe. Over here, they don't even know who we are."

The band played "Shake Down Street" after the set break, and I found myself standing next to Frances, Ram Rod's wife, and she introduced me to Charlie, Jeff Boden's lady. I introduced both of them to Abdul's pipe! I've always loved Frances with her flaring red hair. What fun being with these people in Egypt!

"Nichols, I scored this bottle of Jack Daniels," said Big Steve, "and if you will help put these drums away after the show, we will ride some camels across the desert to a party Bill Graham is putting on for all of us. He has rented an entire night club, and I've got the camels waiting."

"Pass me that bottle, Stevie, I can hardly wait," I said.

The band ended the show with "One More Saturday Night" and we packed the gear in record time. Since the party was on-going, we chose a taxi ride to the night club to save time. Just as we were pulling away from the Sphinx, Candelario waved and stopped us, "Move over, Nichols, or I'm sitting in your lap."

"Not with a rock in your pocket, I hope," I chided him. "No, I got rid of that thing already," he answered, "I put it in my cord case, and I'm taking that home with me, just in case you forget to bring me a bigger one tomorrow."

"I got just the rock for you, Kidd!"

The shadow of the Earth took four hours to cross the surface of the Moon, and the Grateful Dead were in concert the full time. Now, clear of the shadow, the Moon hung directly overhead and illuminated the Sahara Desert in the night.

The Jack Daniels was gone before we got to the nightclub, and we made a loud entrance as Steve let everyone know we were there.

Different parties sat around the room at various tables, and we were served food and drink. Everyone was obviously enjoying themselves, but we were isolated into our little groups.

Bill Graham was quick to realize this and moved the party to an adjoining room with a beautiful view of the Sahara. The tables were larger in this room, and the party began to loosen up. I turned to a table behind me and caught Garcia's eye just as he was being seated, and he motioned for me to join him.

"I'm real sorry about the King's Chamber, Jer, we did everything we could to make it happen."

"That was just a ruse, Bob, a gimmick. It's not important at all that it didn't work. Look at all we did. We came here to experience this culture and to play music to these people, and from the looks of the people dancing on the sand dunes tonight, we are doing something right. There are many unusual and beautiful places left to play," he stated.

Others gathered around us as we talked and someone pulled up another table, soon the entire room was in a semi-circle overlooking the desert scene.

Dawn began to break and the Full Moon was headed toward setting. Bill Graham rode into the desert on a truly beautiful Arabian stallion; a group of hyennas played in the twilight beyond him.

He had arranged for horses for all of the party to take us across the three miles of desert to the Mena House. Nice party you throw, Bill Graham!

My horse apparently didn't want a drunk American on its back and began to buck. Before I knew what was happening I was on

MY back in the soft sand. "Let's try that again," said the stable keeper, holding the bridle of the wild stallion. "No, thanks, I feel an early morning walk would definitely be healthier on my own feet," I quickly decided.

With the Pyramid in sight, I started the three-mile walk through the desert into the rising morning sun.

The Sahara is like no desert I've seen. There are colors in the distant dunes like those of a rainbow and the stones, in shades of red and green, lie nestled in the white sand like jewels. I became very elated at the beauty around me, and as I thought of our departure from this land soon, tears of emotion rolled down my face. I had found Egypt warm and hospitable, her people religious, peace-loving and kind in heart.

The walk seemed to take forever, but slowly the Pyramids drew closer. The early morning risers were sweeping yesterday's sand from the flat-roofed, stone 'chalets' that dot the desert and the day was waking up.

The Moslem Keepers of the Pyramid greeted me good morning and I explained that I was going to retrieve the antenna from above us. A bus tour was arriving and they were busy so I made the relatively familiar climb without a guide. At the antenna I looked at the large stone I had kicked loose from the Pyramid to support it, and thought, 'that's got Kidd's name on it!'

The limestone rock is about thirty inches by eighteen inches and weighs about thirty pounds. I started down the Pyramid with the rock and antenna in hand and as I passed the old Moslem, Mohammed, he looked shocked, "Where are you going with that?" he pointed to the obvious stone. I replied, "Home,

Mohammed, I want to take a little piece of Egypt with me, a stone." The old Moslem caught my sincerity and clasped his hands before him and said, "Go with Allah!"

The stage at the Sphinx was bustling with activity as the Grateful Dead's gear was being loaded into the truck. The same Egyptian as before ran the hand-truck proudly over the makeshift ramp, and Abdul loudly barked out orders as Ram Rod or Steve pointed to the next piece to go.

Not seeing Candelario on stage, I asked, "Where is Kidd's cord case?" Steve pointed to a case and watched as I placed the stone on top of the electrical wiring, and he said, "My God, Nichols, did that come from the Pyramid?"

"I kicked it loose myself to anchor the antenna," I said, adding, "Kidd said he wanted a big one."

Bells rang out in Mena Village and all the Moslems began to pray--they lay down wherever they were, no matter what they were doing, and prostrated themselves facing the east. Prayer time.

The stage was slowly cleared as the gear was loaded and our Moslem guards kept the people back until all was gone. The truck pulled away from the Sphinx stage and the people of Mena Village converged on it: they took every piece of wood, every bent nail and every piece of scrap that was left.

I watched the equipment truck drive past the Great Pyramid of King Cheops, King of Kings, and his Spirit lay undisturbed in his unmatched stone monument.

"I've had a great time in Egypt," said John Hagen as we watched the truck disappear from view, "but, do you know how long I've worn these pants?"

Harry Popick and Betar were taking pictures of the converging hoard of people on the stage. They must have found it as hard to leave as I, because they were still there as I made my way up Pyramid Road toward the Mena House.

I passed the guide Hassan and we stopped to chat along the dusty road. "You are leaving soon?" he asked.

"Yes, my time in Egypt nears the end."

"You will return," Hassan assured me, "there is a saying in my country that once you have tasted the waters of the Nile you will always come back."

"Do you have any baksheesh for me?"

"I have no money, Hassan, but I will offer you my highest reward, the blessings of MY Lord, 'God bless you'," I said with a bow to him.

Hassan bowed, clasped his hands and returned my favor, "Go with Allah!" he stated.





CHAPTER TEN

U.S.A.

Our luggage was being tagged and loaded onto the tour bus in front of the Mena House Oberoi, for the ride to the Cairo Airport. Courtenay, in another burst of pure energy, was gathering a collection of money for Mohammed. The old Moslem blessed us, one and all, as we filed past him and into the bus.

We were delayed shortly at the airport, but finally our tour was given clearance to board for our flight to New York. I was fortunate enough to have an empty seat beside me for the long flight ahead and was not as cramped for space. As we settled down someone lit a hash pipe and the aroma filled the air in our cabin. Up, up and away!

Different people would take the empty seat and chat as we spent the long hours in flight, and at one point it was Kathi Osteen. "Hi," I greeted her, "how was your visit to Luxor?" She took the seat, giving me that big smile and replied, "It was just dazzling! Now I can understand why armies would stop in their tracks at the sight. Also, the pace of the town was much quieter, more subdued in contrast to Cairo."

"I can't remember seeing you at the gigs. Were you in Luxor all that time?"

"No, I was only gone a couple of days and when I returned I met up with Mohammed, and ended up staying with his family. They just took me in and made my trip to Egypt very

special.

"Mohammed's wife, Sadea, is much younger than he is and she's a very plump lady, but just as sweet as she can be. Moslem women are matriarchs in the home, but in the external world they are very oppressed and have little power of opinion.

"The home is her domain, and here she does it all--the cooking, shopping and planning of the budget. Modern day Moslem women have the added responsibility of the family television set, which is in her complete control.

"A big, boxey thing, she drags it from room to room as the family changes places.

"They must dress totally in black whenever outside their homes and are not allowed to attend public performances. Ken Kesey offered Mohammed's family tickets to the concerts, but the women could not accept. I decided on a picnic out in the desert with the women and children and out we headed, where we would not be seen but could hear the music plainly. The children danced in the sand and clapped their hands as we all watched the Moon eclipse.

"The ladies don't drink alcohol, but brought some Stella beer for me. 'Miss Kati' they called me. All of them were more than curious about the freedom of American women and asked a million questions. They could not conceive of me travelling alone, as they are so sheltered and protected."

Kathi showed me a part of Egypt I did not experience because I had little contact with Egyptian women. We sat and talked the long hours away and huddled together holding hands as the cabin lights dimmed. I think I found something else in Egypt and met her at the foot of the great pyramid of King Cheops!

We left the East Coast Deadheads in New York and we changed planes for the West Coast. In San Francisco Kathi and I walked through the terminal arm in arm. "I'll call you," I promised as we parted. "You better!" said she with that big smile.

I had left my car at Bear's house in Marin, and paused at his front door ready to leave, "Bear, I hate to bring this up, but I've got two dollars to my name. Do you have any money?"

"I've got two twenties," he said, "you take one of them." I walked to my car with the same twenty-two dollars I had left with, along with Abdul's trinkets, a few stones and a small bottle of oil.

FINIS

Appendix

Appendix

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ancient Egypt, Discovering its Splendors, National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C.

The Boat Beneath the Pyramid, 1980,
Nancy Jenkins, Thames and Hudson Ltd.,
London

A to Z Horoscope Maker and Delineator, 1910,
Llewellyn George, Llewellyn Publications,
St. Paul, Minn.

Grateful Dead Anthology, 1979 Ice Nine Publishing
Co., Inc.

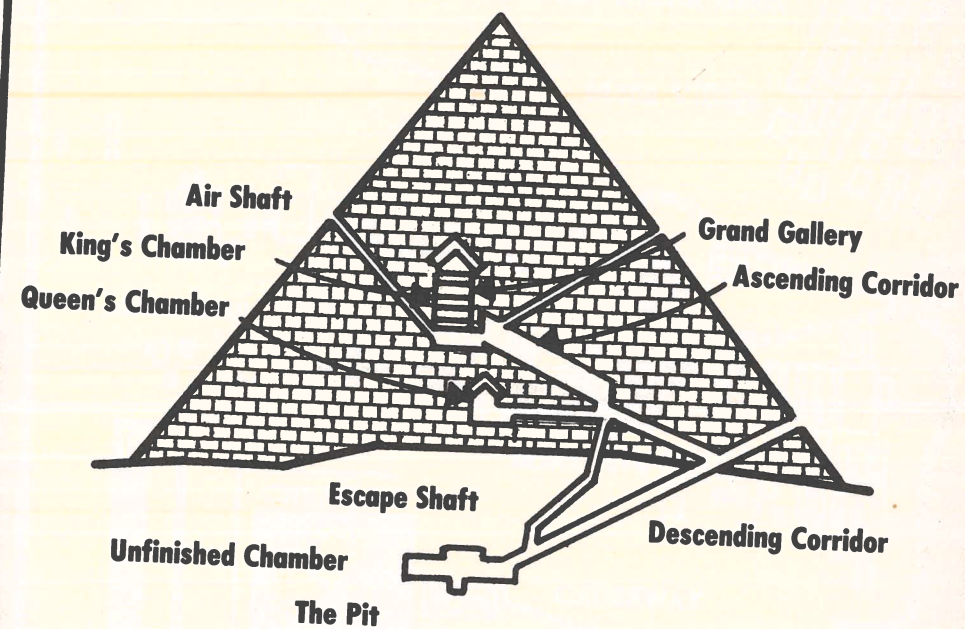
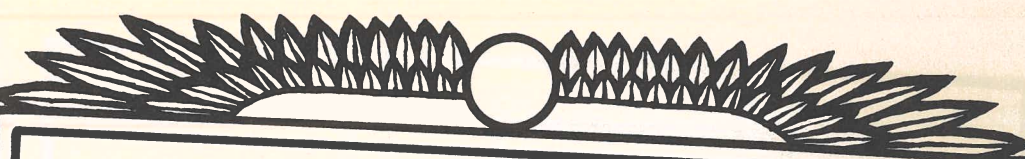
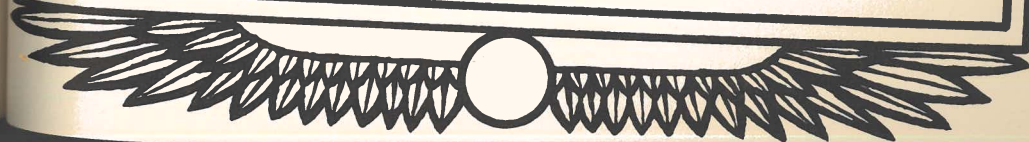
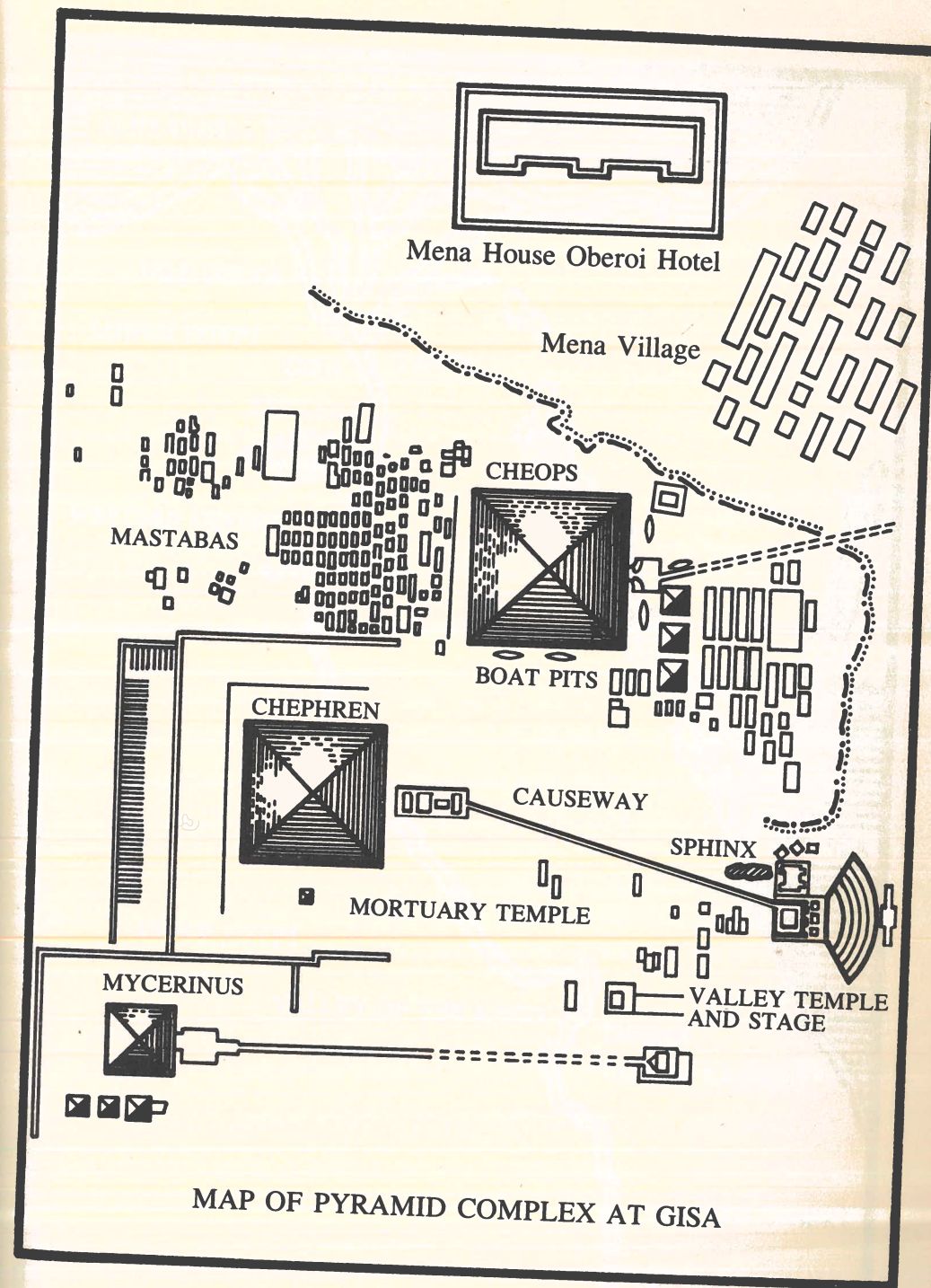
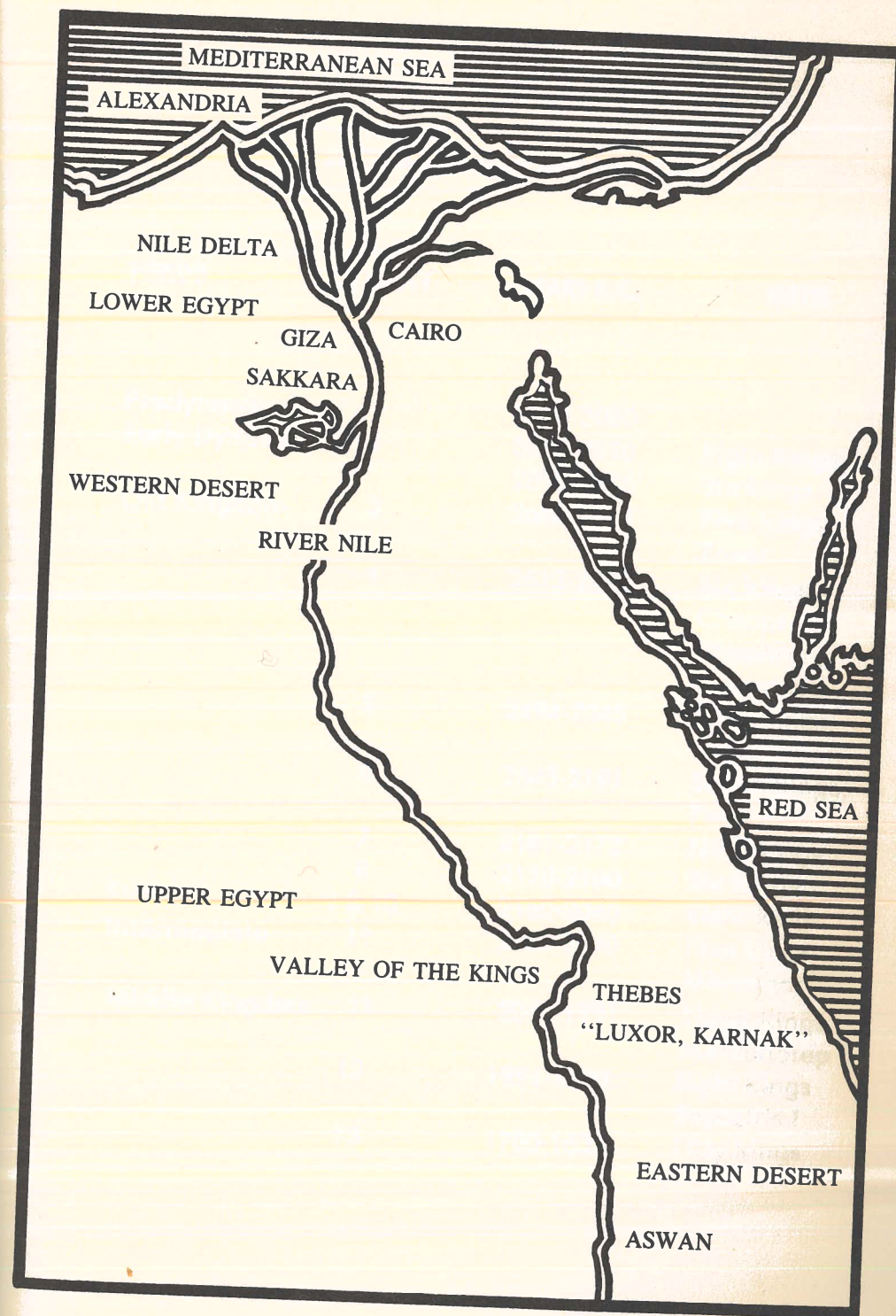


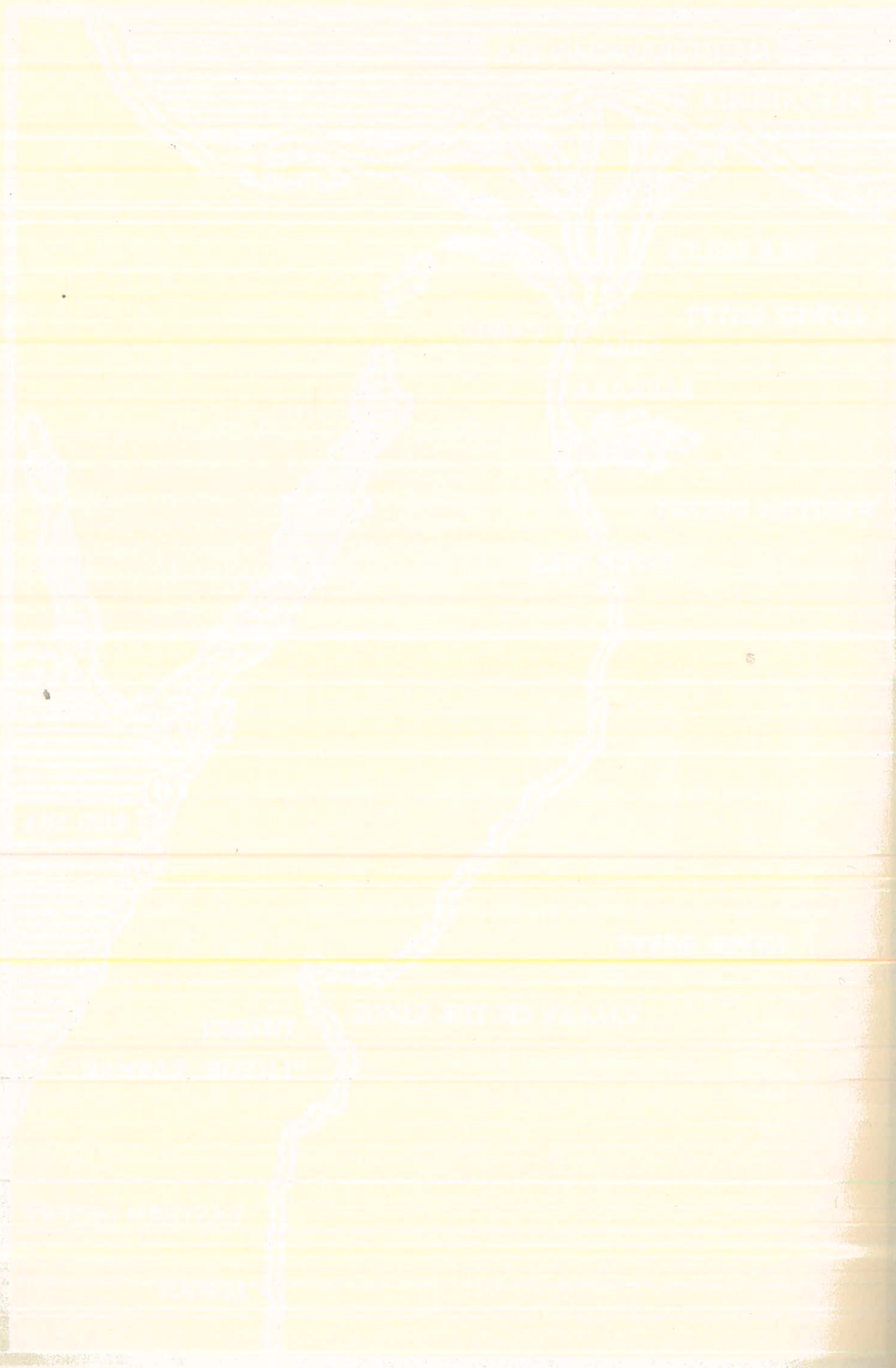
Diagram Of Cheop's Interior







MAP OF UPPER AND LOWER EGYPT



EGYPTIAN PERIODS AND DYNASTIES

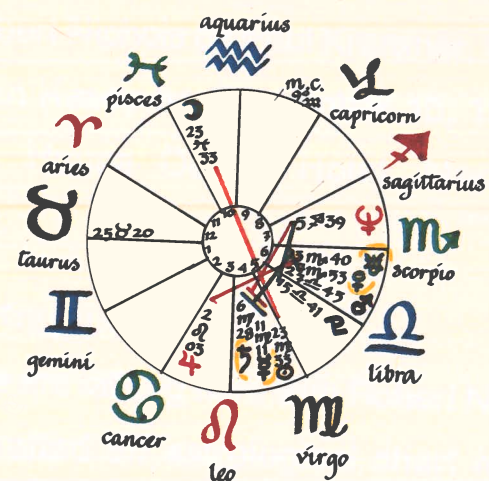
PERIOD	DYNASTY	YEARS B.C.	NOTES
Predynastic		5200-3050	
Early Dynastic	1	3050-2890	Eight kings
		2890-2686	Six kings
Old Kingdom	3	2686-2613	Five kings
	4	2613-2494	Zoser Six kings Cheops, Chephren, Mycerinus
	5	2494-2345	Nine kings, Unas
	6	2345-2181	Seven kings, Pepy I
	7	2181-2173	Nine kings
	8	2173-2160	Six kings
First Intermediate	9 & 10	2160-2040	Eight kings
	11	2133-2040	Five kings Mentuhotep
Middle Kingdom	11	2040-1991	Three kings Mentuhotep II
	12	1991-1780	Eight kings Sesostris I
	13	1780-1633	Fifty kings

Egyptian Periods and Dynasties

PERIOD	DYNASTY	YEARS B.C.	NOTES
Second Intermediate	14	1786-1603	Seventy-six kings
	15 & 16	1674-1558	The Hyksos kings
New Kingdom	17	1650-1558	Fifteen kings
	18	1558-1303	Fourteen kings Ahmose, Amunhotep I and III, Thutmose I, II and III, Queen Hatshepsut, Akhenaten, Smenkhkare, Tutankhamun, Horemheb
Third Intermediate	19	1303-1200	Eight kings Ramses I and II, Seti I and II, Merneptah
	20	1200-1069	Ten kings, Ramses III
Third Intermediate	21	1069-945	Six kings
	22	945-715	Eight Libyan kings, Sheshong I

Egyptian Periods and Dynasties

PERIOD	DYNASTY	YEARS B.C.	NOTES
Third	23	818-715	Six Libyan kings
Intermediate	24	727-715	Two kings
	25	760-656	Six Kushite kings
Saite Renaissance	26	664-525	Six kings
Late Dynastic	27	525-404	Psamtik I Five Persian kings
	28	404-398	One king
	29	398-378	Five kings
	30	378-341	Three kings
	31	341-330	Three Persian kings
Alexander's Conquest		332	
Macedonian Domination		332-304	
Ptolemaic Dynasty		304-330	Fourteen kings
			Ptolemy I, Cleopatra VII
Roman Conquest		30	



Astrological Chart Of Lunar Eclipse
 Cairo, Egypt - 9/16/78 9:06 P.M.
 Moon closes last 2° and eclipses Sun as 60° Earth
 rotation occurs 5:00 P.M. to 9:06 P.M.

Astrology Chart by Kathi Osteen



Original Astrology Chart



ASTROLOGY INTERVIEW

This is an edited transcript of the interview of Robert Nichols by Paul Krassner, video-taped by Ken Kesey on September 10, 1978, at the Mena House Oberoi Hotel, Mena Village, Egypt.

Paul Krassner:

"We are talking here with Robert Nichols who has drafted an astrological chart for the upcoming Lunar Eclipse. What is the starting point for a chart like this, Robert?"

Robert Nichols:

"The chart is a current map of the Universe timed to the Eclipse as we will see it here in Egypt. The date of the occurrence is September 16, 1978, at 9:06 PM, with the Moon at 23 degrees in the sign of Pisces. The Moon will rise on the Eastern Horizon at 5:24 PM, and the Eclipse will begin about 7:30 PM as the shadow of the Earth begins to cover and obscure the Moon's surface."

Paul Krassner:

"Yes, didn't the ancient books have a lot to say about this shadow?"

Robert Nichols:

"They thought the Moon was being devoured in the Middle Ages, and magic rituals were performed to ward off the evil spirits. The shadow actually occurs as the three planets line up and the Earth moves between the Sun and Moon."

Paul Krassner:

"What is the significance of all this?"

Robert Nichols:

"Well, for one thing, the complete spectacular Eclipse will be visible from the outdoor Sphinx stage as the Grateful Dead play the third and final concert here in Egypt, and we're looking for a good high time.

"Looking at the chart we see that 25 degrees of Taurus is on the Eastern Horizon, or rising, at the time of the Eclipse, and this should be helpful as Taurus is ruled by Venus, and she is associated with grace, art, music and harmony.

"Eclipses, in general terms, produce the weird stuff, the bizarre, the unusual and the unexpected, so we look for all the help we can get.

"Trouble will likely come from a square, or 90-degree angle between Mars and Jupiter, as you can note in the chart, and Mars is in Libra. Here we might see legal problems appear, contract disputes, that sort of thing. Mars is a trouble-maker and there will likely be disruptions, upheavals, even earthquakes, as Taurus, an Earth sign, is rising as the Eclipse culminates.

"There seems to be a balance of energies in the chart, a little good and a little bad, and all the Planets are grouped around the Sun while the Moon stands alone in opposition. The ancients said Eclipses are powerful deposits of energy, and from that stage as the Grateful Dead go into song, there will be more than one show going on."

Paul Krassner:

"Thank you very much, Robert."

EPILOGUE

As work progressed on this book and many people were interviewed, it became apparent that everyone involved had a special kind of experience in our fascinating journey through the Country of Egypt. The fact that the final Egyptian concert, performed by the Grateful Dead on the outdoor Sphinx stage happened under a full, visible Lunar Eclipse, was a 'Cosmic Coincidence.' We didn't plan it that way, the Universe did.

This epic pilgrimage to the Pyramids, along with the spectacular Eclipse, continues to be one of the high-lights in the amazing 20-year career of the Grateful Dead.

I spent the following two years after the Egyptian tour on the road with the Grateful Dead, and finally, actually became a fairly good trucker. We crossed the American Continent repeatedly, doing concerts in every major city, and even took the show North to Alaska, up the great Alcan Highway.

All this, and more, is currently being written
in a follow-up book, "Truckin' with the Grateful
Dead: U.S.A."

This work has been a pleasure, and I hope
it brings the same to you.

Robert Nichols
December, 1983